

Inside

February 1978
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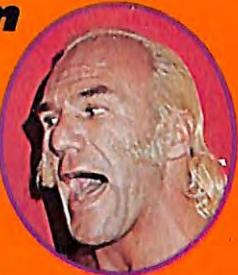
Superstar Graham

vs.

Bob Backlund:

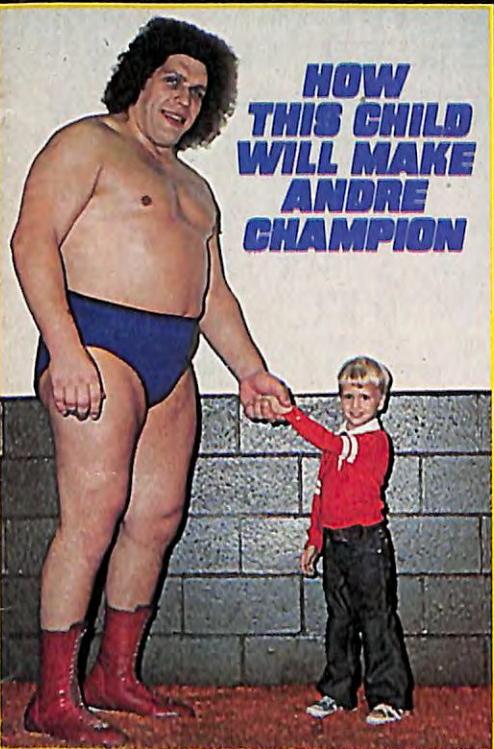
**INSIDE WRESTLING'S
\$100,000 GAMBLE**

**VICTORY
SPORTS
SERIES**



Wrestling

**HOW
THIS CHILD
WILL MAKE
ANDRE
CHAMPION**



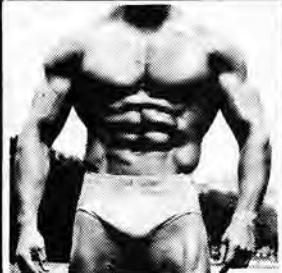
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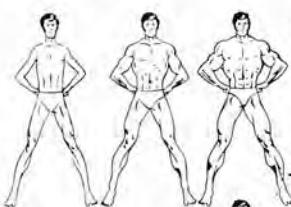
Booklet

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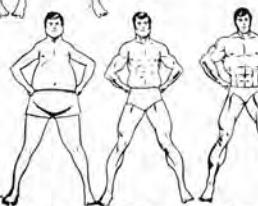
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That's because I'm afraid that if you tell anyone about the simple secret of good luck before you start using it, they might be able to talk you out of it. They will try to tell you that there is just no way to be so lucky all at once.

But there is.

And, I'm sure that if you try it privately for just two weeks—no one will ever be able to talk you out of it then.

Before I go on, I'd like to tell you that I'm not a miracle worker or a mystic of any kind.

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A short time ago, I was a businessman who was extremely unlucky. Not anymore.

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Then, by accident, I stumbled onto the real secret of great good luck. The very first time I played Bingo after I discovered my secret I hit a Jackpot Bingo for \$373.

I discovered the secret in a tiny antique shop in my neighborhood—a lovely combination pendant/key chain in the form of a Lucky Horseshoe. It was finished in gleaming 14k gold—and my heart practically stopped when I spotted it.

The shopkeeper told me the history of the amulet—how for hundreds of



years men and women have believed with all their hearts and souls that the golden Lucky Horseshoe had the mystic power to bring riches beyond belief, unlimited love and affection, supreme happiness—to all who used it.

I felt I had found the answer—the true secret of good luck—and I bought the one-of-a-kind Lucky Horseshoe for over a hundred dollars.

I started to use it at once. I started to win at Bingo consistently—to win Contests and Lotteries—to find the Happiness, Joy and Love I had been seeking for so very long.

When my friends saw that I had become "the luckiest man in town" they asked me to give them my secret. Since I had now found everything in life I wanted—I decided to give it to them.

I had a master jeweler create five exact copies of my golden Lucky Horseshoe—three as key chains with proper attachments for keys—two as pendants—complete with matching golden chains. I gave them as gifts to my five closest friends.

It worked for them, too!

Now, you and I both know that there's a great deal of money to be made for the person who comes up with the true secret of good luck—a secret that really works. I am certain that I have done just that.

But, was the astounding good fortune brought to me and my friends a fluke? Perhaps there was something "special" about us that made the golden Lucky Horseshoe so very powerful. I don't believe that for a moment.

However, I MUST PROVE IT!

For, once I prove that my golden Lucky Horseshoe works—really works—I will offer it to all men and women who want and need great good luck—for \$15—and it will be worth every penny of it. (How many times have you said to yourself that you'd pay a for-

tune for something that really works?)

So, to prove that my golden Lucky Horseshoe works for ALL men and women—I'll send you either the pendant or the key chain for little more than the cost of making it up.

Remember, I'm willing to do this for my own selfish reason. Once YOU have become a Winner—once YOU find all the Money you need—once YOU have all the Love, Joy, Happiness and Affection you want—I'll probably make a mint when I offer the PROVEN amulet to the general public.

But, you must make me a promise. You must let me know your good luck results. This will be the proof I need!

I feel certain that it makes no difference whether you are a man or a woman (it works for both)—no difference if you are young or old—and even if you have until today always considered yourself unlucky—your golden Lucky Horseshoe MUST work for you or it won't cost you a single penny.

You are GUARANTEED good luck, or your money back—without quibble or question.

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THE MAGAZINE THAT RIPS
THE LID OFF PRO WRESTLING

INSIDE Wrestling

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President And Publisher

PETER KING
Editor-In-Chief

ROBERT J. THORNTON
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Art Staff

THEO EHRET
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BOB SABRE
Photographers

COVER PHOTOS
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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Peter
King

Editor-in-Chief

We've done it! We've made a great wrestling magazine even better. How? By adding the mighty pen of Matt Brock to our staff of columnists.

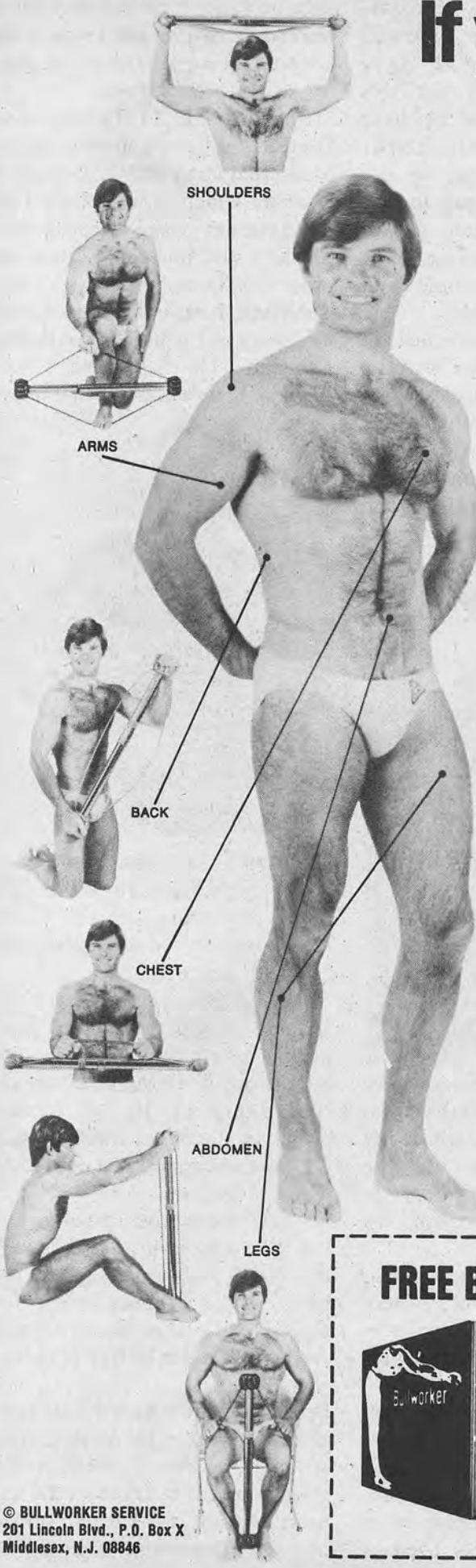
Matt Brock has been a hero of mine for many years. He is, after all, the Father of Wrestling Journalism. What Bruno Sammartino is to wrestlers, Matt Brock is to reporters. And now, after a retirement of nearly 10 years, Matt has decided to come back. His column will appear exclusively in INSIDE WRESTLING.

I'm sure you'll agree with me his hard-hitting, no-nonsense approach to the mat world is a super addition to the pages of this magazine. But don't take my word for it: Read him for yourself. You'll soon discover why Matt is the only wrestling reporter in history to win the coveted Pfister Journalism Award. Yes, fans, Brock's back...and we've got him!

* * *

Here are some late bulletins: The Race vs. Graham "Superbout" has been canceled. No one is saying why, but if you ask me, it's a case of two "champions" turning chicken...My informed sources in the AWA swear Lord Al Hays has offered Bobby Heenan a cool million bucks for Nick Bockwinkle's contract. As of now, Bobby is mulling the offer. You'd better hurry, Heenan: If Bockwinkle should lose the belt, the deal is dead...Get this: Ken Patera is rooting for Bob Backlund to defeat Superstar Graham! Why? Well, Patera claims Graham won't give him a title shot. "And," adds Ken, "I can beat Backlund in under three minutes!" C'mon, Ken. You don't really expect us to believe that, do you?

See you next month!



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ON THE ROAD

with

Michael B. Kape

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FAIRGROUNDS
RICHMOND

ON THE ROAD—Periodically, I like to go back and revisit some people I have previously interviewed for this column. I like to see how they have been progressing since our discussions, and whether or not their lives have changed in any way. It was impossible to see everyone, but I did manage to see some very special people and update my files on them.

Rocky Johnson: The last time I got together with Rocky, we were on the road to Los Angeles from Texas. Johnson had been dividing his time between the two areas. Now he is back down in Florida. Why he wants to be there is beyond



me, but that is his decision. We recently took a drive together from Miami to Orlando. He is still one of the slowest drivers on the highways. It took us three extra hour to get to our destination. Oh well.

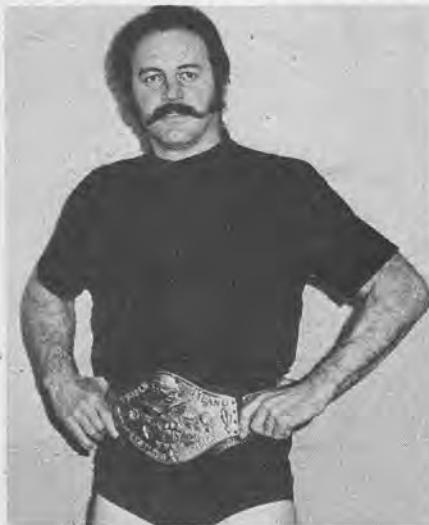
"I've been doing all right here in Florida," Rocky told me. "There are a lot of rulebreakers down here who need to be straightened out, and I aim to do it."

I wished him good luck, then moved on to the next town.

The Sheik: I remember well my last visit (or attempt to visit) this man. It was one of the worst experiences of my life. I had simply tried to

obtain an interview with him. I was burned in the process. I was in the hospital for weeks, and off the road for several weeks more.

Sheik is still in Toronto and Detroit, though he does make an occasional foray into Texas (which is where I met up with him). I do not have any desire to speak with Sheik. I saw him and turned the other way. Once burned, twice shy. **Blackjack Lanza:** I found Lanza in Chicago with his partner, Bobby Duncum. The last time I saw Blackjack, he was not a champion.



He is not a champion now, though he was between the two visits. Our last conversation was one of the most controversial ones I have ever had with any wrestler.

At that time, Lanza was having serious misgivings about even being a wrestler at all. At the time, he was on the verge of leaving the sport altogether. He has changed his mind since that time. Being a tag team champion had a lot to do with his decision.

"Now that I have had a taste of the championship life," said Blackjack, "I want it again. But there still are times when I'm plagued with those same, nagging doubts. I'll never be free of them I guess."

Dusty Rhodes: The last time I saw Dusty we were journeying from Atlanta to Miami. Rhodes was given a speeding ticket on the way down. In my car! I found him in

(Continued on page 50)

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'TOP SECRET'



Behind the Dressing Room Door

**by Randy
Gordon**

A NYBODY WHO WATCHED "The World's Strongest Man" competition on CBS-TV knows that Ken Patera finished third. But what they don't know is that I, Randy Gordon, was responsible for Patera finishing third. If it hadn't been for me, Patera would have won, and claimed the title of "The World's Strongest Man." Thank goodness for me!

Actually, it was quite easy. My mere presence alone was enough to shake up Patera. When he first spotted me, Patera put his hands over his face and moaned, "Oh, no, not you!" At that moment, he knew he was in trouble. I also played a little prank on Patera that aided in his finishing third. Before the start of the competition, all the participants were asked to pose in the uniform they intended to wear. Knowing Ken's measurements, I had another uniform made up that looked exactly like Ken's. It was the same color and the same style. However, it was slightly smaller all around, meaning it would not fit Patera perfectly, and thus be uncomfortable and restrict his movements.

On the morning the events started, I snuck into Patera's room with a skeleton key while he was out to breakfast, and switched uniforms. Then it was off to the set of Universal Studios in Hollywood to await the opening round of events.

No matter where Patera went, or what Patera did, this reporter was with him. I even brought my twin brother, Rick, along, but never let Patera see the two of us together. Once, to get away from me, Ken got into a golf cart and

(Continued on page 48)

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Body Slams & Pinfalls

By Dan Shocket

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN remarking on the recent improvement in the air quality. The reason behind it must be Bruno Sammartino's inactivity. The less he wrestles, the fewer arenas he stinks out.

The Italian slander is limiting his appearances, thankfully. We can hope it finally gets to the point where he'll retire for good (for the good of wrestling). In preparation for that glorious day, let's look back on his career. Have your barf bags at the ready; this could be a bumpy flight.

We first laugh at Bruno as a misshapen hulk whose main skill lies in bribing referees. His early, inexpensive successes win him the loyalty of ignorant wrestling fans. Bruno and the morons deserve each other.

As Bruno becomes more successful, he bribes his way to the main events. Finally, he gets his chance against Buddy Rogers to try for the WWWF title. Rogers, not taking Sammartino seriously, was talking with the referee when Sammartino sneak-attacked and beat him. Few people know this. It's something a lot of people don't want known. Figure out who they are.

From there on, Sammartino's reign of infamy reached the heights of corruption. Grand Wizard, a manager who tried

dutifully to train a wrestler to return the title's dignity, remembers those times sadly.

"I'd find a wrestler," Wizard recalls, "train him well, and then get a title match against Sammartino. It looked like we were in the money when the referee would disqualify my man, letting Sammartino keep his title. It got to the point where many wrestlers wouldn't even bother wrestling Sammartino. They'd



Bruno Sammartino, a study in dazed stupidity (our columnist's favorite photo of Sammartino).

say, 'He owns the referees. What's the point in trying to beat him?' And all I could answer was 'You owe it to wrestling. The sport needs a decent champion. No matter what the odds, you've got to try.' That, and a lot of money, convinced some to make



Lou Albano takes matters into his own hands, or feet, by delivering a hard kick to Sammartino (above).

the attempt. Not enough, though. That's why Sammartino stayed champion so long. He bought the title and kept buying his successful defenses."

However, whenever tyranny reigns, a hero emerges. Ivan Koloff was such a man. He beat Sammartino so convincingly even the referee couldn't save him. To save his ugly face, Sammartino made up some story about a car accident injury before the match. Fans believed it. Morons believe any excuses. The reason Koloff won is simple: Ivan is the better wrestler.

There is no proof Sammartino paid \$15,000 to the referee who allowed Pedro Morales to take Koloff's title. There's no proof; it's just an accepted fact. Hell hath no fury like a bum beaten.

(Continued on page 54)

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NAMES MAKI

WWWF Champion SUPER-STAR GRAHAM found a loophole in his contract which enabled him to avoid a third Madison Square Garden confrontation against "The American Dream," DUSTY RHODES. "I have outsmarted Rhodes both in the ring and at the negotiating table!" boasts Graham. "Dusty Rhodes is an all-around loser!"

Another one of our predictions has come true. We have been telling you to keep your eyes on rookie star RICK STEAMBOAT because he will be going places in this sport. Well, Rick just won the United States Heavyweight title from RIC FLAIR! Now the confident rookie feels nothing can keep him from winning the NWA championship from HARLEY

with his "swinging neckbreaker" and should have been barred for life!

After finishing a condensed two-week training session which concentrated on tag team tactics, the newly formed team of JOSE LOTHARIO and ALBERTO MADRIL has won the Texas tag team belts . . . No one can figure out DICK SLATER. In Georgia, Dick is a fan favorite, wrestling only hated rulebreakers. Yet in Missouri, Dick is one of the most hated men to ever wrestle in that state . . . Speaking about personality changes, fans in Texas are shocked—but pleased—with the recent behavior of ERNIE LADD. Ladd, known as a rulebreaker in that state for years, is now going against KILLER BROOKS, JOHN STUDD and other notorious men . . . Lady luck has smiled on the careers of GREG VALENTINE and RIC FLAIR. They just took the tag team belts from THE ANDERSON BROTHERS—the second time they have done so in less than one year!

STAN HANSEN plans to use



DUSTY RHODES

RACE later this year . . . After the WWWF placed an indefinite suspension on KEN PATERA, they then decided to fine him a mere \$5,000 and reinstate him. We think they let Patera off much too easy. This man crippled three men

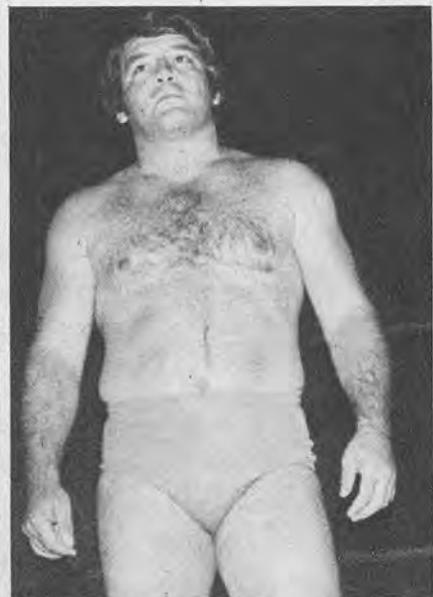


STAN HANSEN



MR. WRESTLING II

his neckbreaking "lariat" on MR. WRESTLING II. If you remember, the masked man had his neck broken several years ago by PROFESSOR TANAKA. Doctors informed him if he ever had his neck broken again, he would be forced to retire. "By the end of 1978," Hansen says, "Mr. Wrestling II will be only a memory to his army of stupid fans!" . . . "PAUL JONES is an American Pig!" so says Germany's BARON VON RASCHKE . . . Would you believe the most popular tag team in the



PAUL JONES

N' NEWS

Bill Apter
reporting...

Northwest is MOONDOG MAYNE and DUTCH SAVAGE! . . . THE VALIANT BROTHERS have won the WWA tag team title . . . KILLER KARL KOX has become an advisor for LARS ANDERSON.

AWA champion NICK BOCKWINKLE says he is fed up



NICK BOCKWINKLE

with the calibre of his challengers in the association and has been accepting dates in other territories. "Even in the NWA I cannot find any decent challenge," claims Bockwinkle. "I can't believe there is not one worthy man in this whole sport who can provide me with competition." . . . At one time, PEDRO MORALES and PAT PATTERSON were tag team partners. Then Patterson became a rulebreaker and enmeshed himself in a bitter feud with Pedro. It appears now Pat has decided to change his ways, again. He has split with tag team partner IVAN KOLOFF and wants to befriend Pedro. Will Pedro accept Pat's friendly overtures? "I don't think so," Pedro told our Florida correspondent. "You can't trust him. He is two faced."

SPIROS ARION has returned to the WWWF under the guidance of FRED BLASSIE . . . BOB BACKLUND swears if he wins the WWWF championship, he will uphold its dignity in the same manner BRUNO SAMMARTINO did. "I would take on all comers and wrestle only by the rules," vows Bobby . . . DICK MURDOCH admits JERRY OATES gave him one of the toughest battles of his life . . . No one knows why TERRY FUNK is trying to drive RON and ROBERT FULLER out of WRESTLING . . . BOB ROOP wants a steel cage match against ANDRE THE GIANT. According to Roop, the last time he wrestled Andre, all the Giant did was run from him. "He can't get away from me in a steel cage," snarls Bob.

GREG GAGNE and JIM BRUNZELL are tired of defending their AWA tag team title against former titleholders BOBBY DUNCUM and BLACKJACK LANZA. "We have given them 10



PEDRO MORALES



DICK MURDOCH

title shots," says Jim. "That should be more than enough." . . . JIMMY SNUKA used his breathtaking flying bodypress to subdue JOHN STUDD . . . ROGER KIRBY says he is the best wrestler in the AWA and if they would just give him some main event matches, he would have a chance to prove it . . . JOHNNY VALENTINE was a recent guest of GORDON SOLIE'S on the national "Championship Wrestling From Florida," television show . . . BRUISER BRODIE writes from Australia that he will be returning to the states in a few months. "President Carter will declare a national holiday the day I return," Brodie writes. "Everyone will be so glad to see me again!" Don't hold your breath, Bruiser!

That's all for now. See you next month. □

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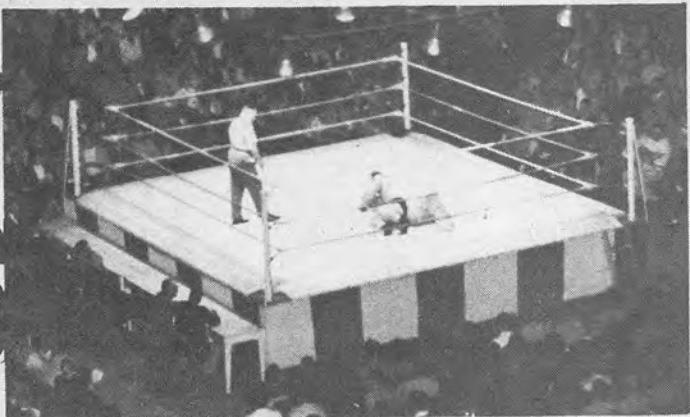
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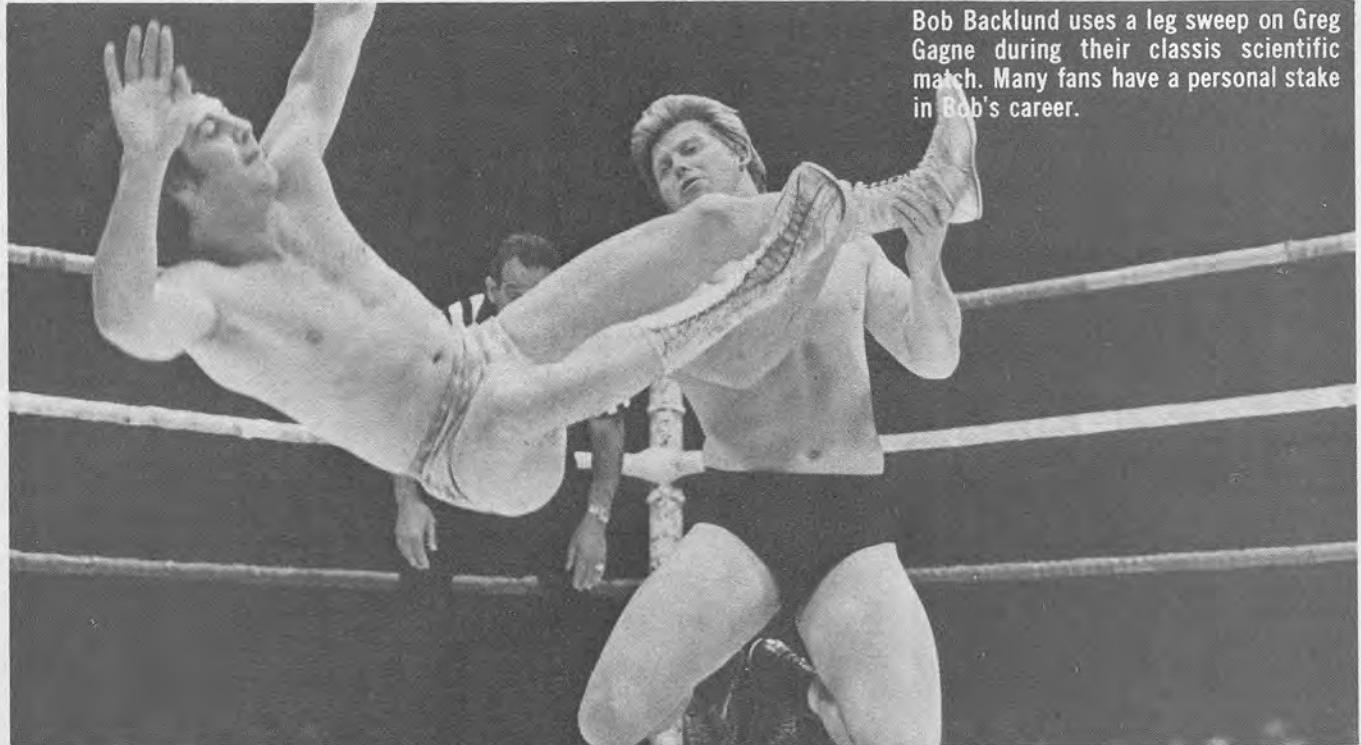
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SINCERELY YOURS



Bob Backlund uses a leg sweep on Greg Gagne during their classic scientific match. Many fans have a personal stake in Bob's career.



THE AMAZING BOB

"A Personal Thank You From Bob Backlund" (December 1977) was a good story, but it did not begin to describe how I feel about this amazing young man. I think it's time the whole world knew just how great a person Bob Backlund truly is.

To begin with, Bob Backlund has earned several thousand fans for life. That he would sit down and take the time to write each and every one of us a personal letter is amazing. We only did what we had to do—try to open the door for him to wrestle in the WWWF. What he did was not necessary. What other wrestler would ever think of sending each and every one of us a personal thank you note?

None that I know of, and that includes all the greats, too.

No matter where he goes or what he does, from now on I will be a Bob Backlund fan. I am proud of that fact. And I think every person who received a postcard from Bob is also a lifelong fan of his. No other wrestler has ever gone so far out of his way to be kind to the fans. He has deserved our love and respect.

SUSAN MILLES
Brockport, N.Y.

HORROR OF IT ALL

I was personally outraged when I read "The Andre the Giant Story Only We Dare Print" (December 1977). Of course, I know only a magazine like

INSIDE WRESTLING would have the courage to print such an article, fearing none of the possible consequences.

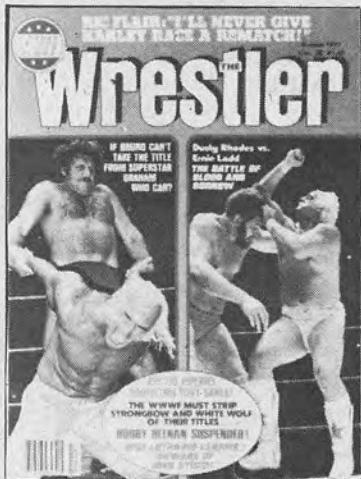
I think it is horrible. These managers think they can do anything, including buying the contract of Andre the Giant. I'm glad Andre was able to stop this conspiracy before it was too late. I would hate to think what would happen if he was ever under the control of a man like Lou Albano.

Your magazine did the wrestling community a service by printing this story. I hope that you continue in your quest to uncover the truth, no matter how painful it might be.

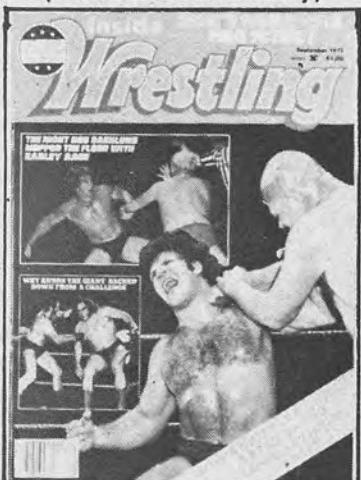
DANIEL COLE
Billings, Mont.

(Continued on page 56)

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CHARLESTON, S.C.

By Melvin Snell



RIC FLAIR
vs.
RICK STEAMBOAT



The coveted United States heavyweight title of the National Wrestling Alliance changed hands as **✓ Rick Steamboat** won a sensational victory over defending champion **Ric Flair**.

OTHER BOUTS: Blackjack Mulligan aced Johnny Weaver . . . The Missouri Mauler was too big and strong for **Ric McGraw** . . . Sandy Scott and **Tully Blanchard** crushed Tony Russo and **Ric Ferrera**.

PROVIDENCE, R.I.

By Octavia Latso



SUPERSTAR GRAHAM
vs.
PETER MAIVIA



Superstar **Billy Graham** successfully defended his WWWF belt with a countout victory over **Peter Maivia**. Graham survived many close calls, almost being pinned twice. But when it was over, he was still champion.

OTHER BOUTS: George Steele used every foreign object ever invented in a losing effort to ex-WWWF king **Bruno Sammartino** . . . Chief Jay Strongbow took a popular though controversial decision from **Ken Patera**.

GREENSBORO, N.C.

By Horace H. Terry Jr.



PAUL JONES
vs.
✓ MASKED SUPERSTAR



In a grudge match here at the Greensboro Coliseum, **Paul Jones** again locked horns with the **Masked Superstar**. Jones was awarded the bout after Superstar's manager, Boris Malenko, threw a blinding powder in Jones face and thereby had his man disqualified.

OTHER BOUTS: **Ric Flair** and **Greg Valentine** won the NWA world tag team belts by besting the Anderson Brothers . . . Boris Malenko won over **Klondike Bill**.

WRESTLING CAPITALS



MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

By Ken Dunlop



RICK MARTEL
vs.
BRUISER BRODIE



The feud between Ricky Martel and Bruiser Brodie continues. In their latest encounter, Brodie was victorious by stealing a victory from fan favorite Martel. Ricky promises revenge . . . and soon!

OTHER BOUTS: Mario Milano halted Killer Karl Krupp . . . Bugsy McGraw and Butcher Brannigan drew in a brass knucks match . . . Ron Miller and NWA king Harley Race also went to a one hour draw.

PITTSBURGH, PA.

By David Heid



TORU TANAKA
vs.
IVAN PUTSKI



Professor Toru Tanaka, one-half of the WWWF tag team champions, took on single competition in the person of Ivan Putski. Ivan was awarded the match when Tanaka was disqualified for throwing salt in the popular Pole's eyes.

OTHER BOUTS: Peter Maivia was injured in his latest unsuccessful assault on Billy Graham's WWWF title . . . Stan Stasiak and Pittsburgh's own Larry Zbyszko went to a 30 minute draw . . . Bill Burger dumped the Red Demon.

ROME, GEORGIA

By Lynn Cantrell



MR. WRESTLING II
vs.
PAK SONG



The "Korean Killer," Pak Song, took on Mr. Wrestling II in a special no-disqualification match. The mysterious masked man was victorious after hitting Pak with a series of kneelifts. The time was 24:08.

OTHER BOUTS: Bob Armstrong and Tommy Rich quashed Stan Hansen and Sgt. Jacques Goulet . . . Charlie Cook took the measure of Jim Grabmire . . . Randy Savage and Jerry Stubbs wrestled to an exciting draw.

HOW THIS CHILD WILL MAKE ANDRE CHAMPION



Andre snares Ernie Ladd in a headlock. The maneuvers used to set Ladd up for the hold were devised by a child!



THE SMALL BOY sat on a chair in the corner of the dressing room. To an unknowing observer, he might have appeared to have been asleep. His eyes were closed, his body seemed completely relaxed. But to those who knew what was happening, it was clear this lad was doing anything but sleeping.

In the arena itself, Andre the Giant was wrestling a ruthless rulebreaker. But the man's tactics did not bother Andre; he knew exactly what to do. In very little time, Andre had completely vanquished his opponent. He

had done it brilliantly, one must add. He had used a predetermined strategy and it had worked.

Back in the dressing room, the boy came out of his pose. He had not been sleeping, he had been in intense concentration. He was using this time to devise strategy for Andre the Giant's next match!

This small boy is someone very special.

Just to hear him speak, you know you are in the presence of a genius. There is no qualification to that; he is a genius. He knows his subject

thoroughly. He has been studied by leading scholars at major universities; they want to know how he can be so brilliant.

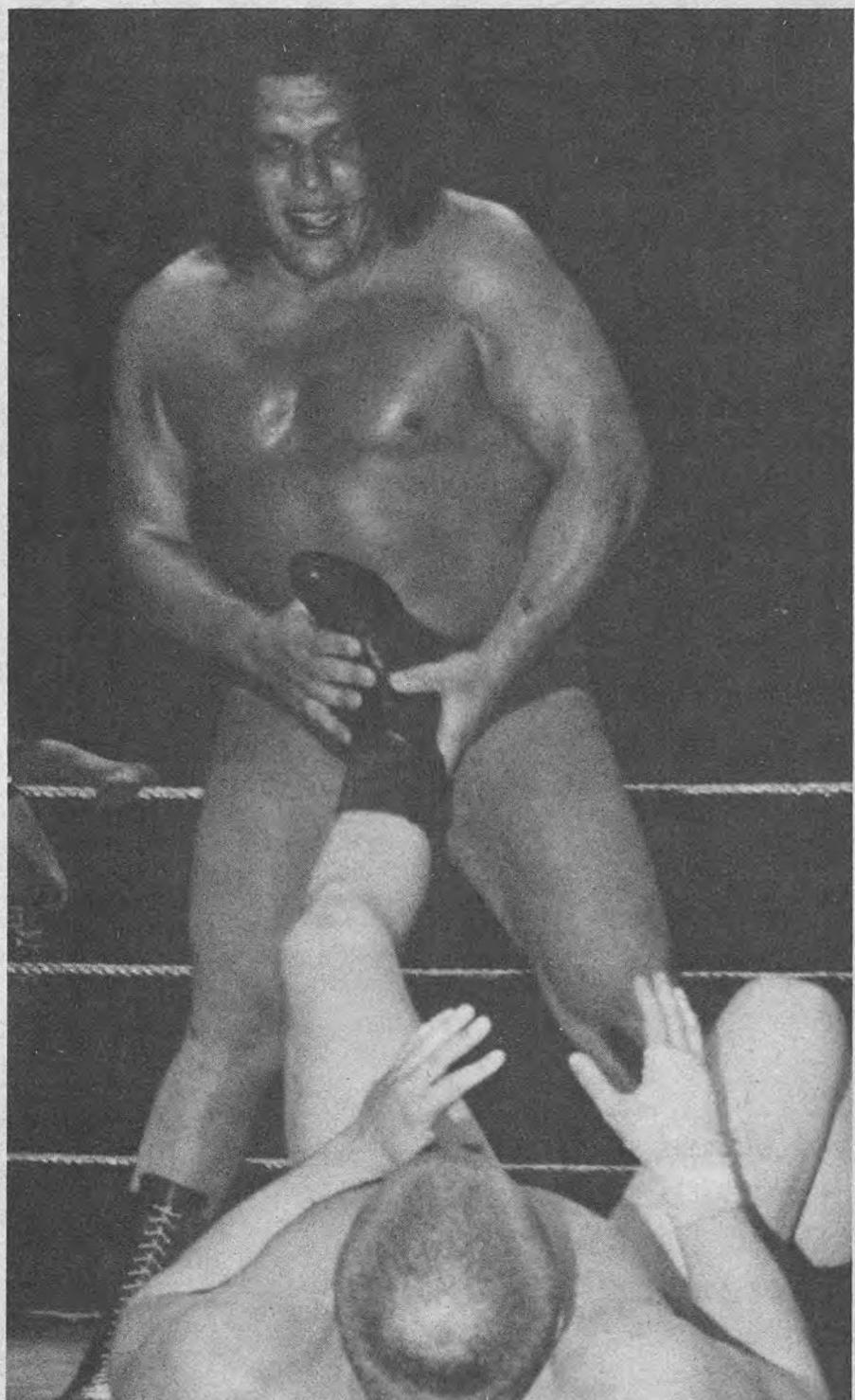
By now, every wrestler in the sport has heard about this child prodigy (because of legal reasons, his name cannot be printed). He has proven his genius when it comes to devising complex wrestling strategies. In fact, it is reputed he has so clear an understanding of the sport, he can be compared to the most accomplished of veterans for his knowledge. And he is only five years old!

Every wrestler in the sport would like to have access to this child's knowledge. However, only one man does—Andre the Giant.

For several months now, Andre has been listening to the advice given to him by this five-year-old wrestling genius. And there has been a marked improvement in the way he has been wrestling. Can this be attributed to the child prodigy? No one will either confirm or deny this in public. However, it is clear this boy may hold the key to Andre's future.

One wrestler, a friend of Andre's who asked not to be identified in print, said, "There is no doubt that the boy has made a big difference in the way Andre wrestles. Andre was very good before. Now he is unbeatable. It is clear that this boy was the best thing that ever happened to Andre. I expect Andre will soon be a world champion. He'll owe his success to this boy."

(Continued on page 44)



Andre snares Nikolai Volkoff's leg during a recent match. The success of this maneuver has been analyzed by the young boy and made more efficient. Friends say Andre's latest victories have been due to the boy's instructions.

The Bible says a little child shall lead. This may be a prophecy for Andre the Giant, whose "advisor" is only five years old. This young genius envisions wrestling strategies guaranteed to make Andre champion!

TOP WRESTLE YOUR QUESTION

Do you have a question which concerns all of wrestling? Well, each month in INSIDE WRESTLING, the sport's greatest stars will answer a question sent in by a reader. If you wish to have your question answered by the stars, send it to: ASK THE STARS, INSIDE WRESTLING, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571

The "Question of the Month" is:

"What is the one match you wish you had not wrestled?"

**Submitted by:
Gary Paul Cubeta;
Middletown,
Connecticut**



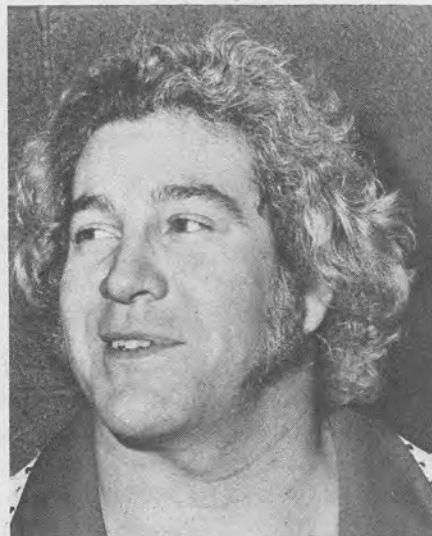
GREG GAGNE

"Every match I wrestle I make some mistakes. They are usually small, but I learn from each one. I never make the same error twice. Therefore, I have no regrets. I'm glad I wrestled in each and every match."



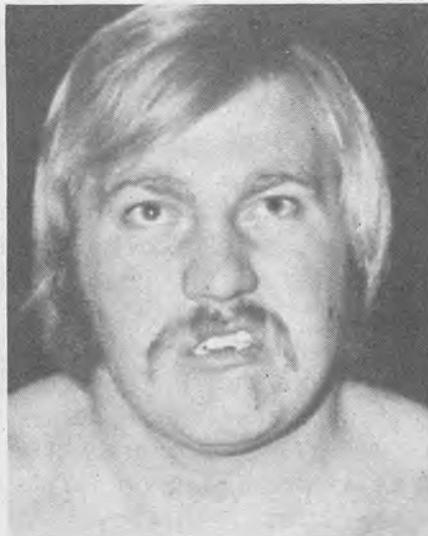
ROCKY JOHNSON

"Sheik is the one man I would never want to wrestle again. And I am certainly ashamed of what happened the one time I did wrestle him. He brings out the worst in a man. I don't understand why."



KEN PATERA

"My biggest regret stems from the night I crippled Billy White Wolf. I'm really sorry things turned out the way they did. After all, I thought for sure I had killed him. Boy, was I disappointed!"



JOHN STUDD

"Why should there be a match I would not have wanted to wrestle? I always wrestle brilliantly. I have no regrets. Why should I? When you're the best, you have nothing to lament."

WRESTLERS ANSWER OF THE MONTH



SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM

"Daddy, I'm sorry anytime I wrestle a slob like Ivan Putski. I have had to waste my very precious and valuable time on that Polish joke. It upsets me, daddy, and I do not want to have to do it again."



JACK BRISCO

"There is no question that I should not have wrestled Terry Funk that night in Miami when he took my title. I was supposed to wrestle Dory, and I had trained appropriately. I was not ready for Terry."



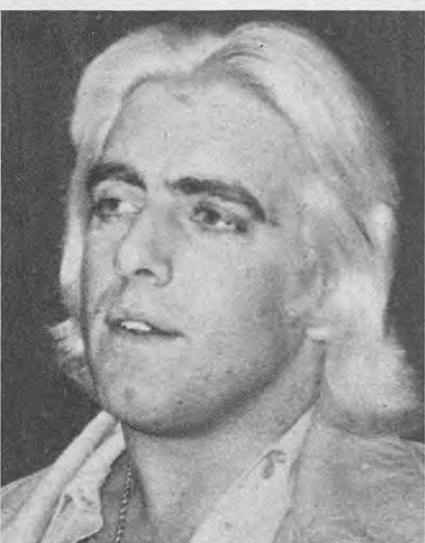
PAUL JONES

"Looking back on it, I think I would not have wanted to wrestle that first match against Dick Slater. It caused a major feud between us. A lot of pain went down because of that match. I'm sorry I was in it."



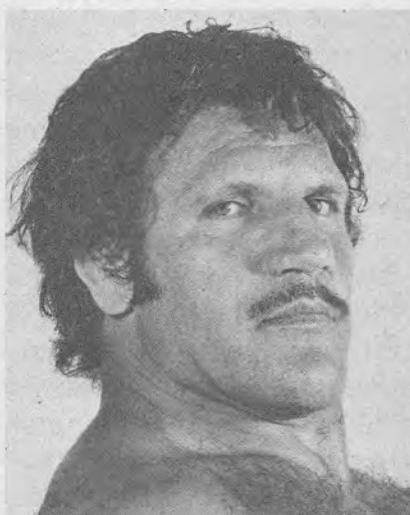
MR. WRESTLING II

"If I could have not wrestled that match in which Professor Tanaka broke my neck, I would have been very happy. I went through more pain after that match than I care to remember."



RIC FLAIR

"I really should never have wasted my time wrestling Wahoo McDaniel. I like a challenge. I know I can steamroll McDaniel. That feathered freak isn't an Indian, he's a turkey!"



BRUNO SAMMARTINO

"Very few people know this, but I think one of the worst matches of my life was against Ken Patera. There was one particular night when he really hurt me. Fortunately, I was able to overcome the pain and win." □



Matt Brock's PLAIN SPEAKING

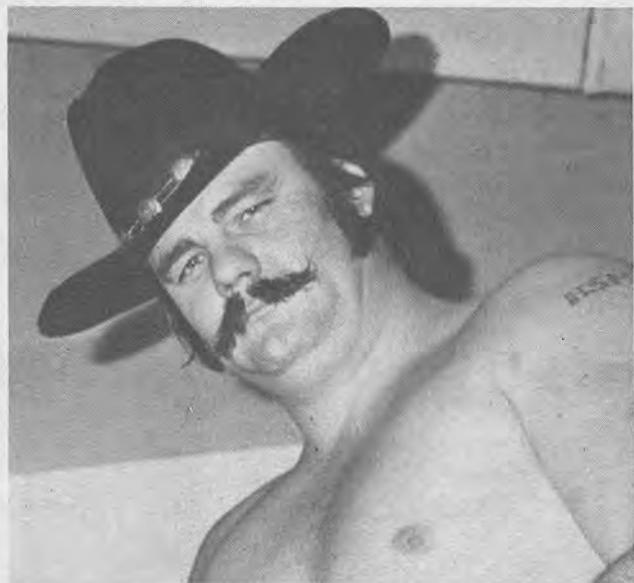
NEW YORK: This is a town where smart people stay in the shadows. Strangers can learn things if they remain unknown. Don't ask how I know Chief Jay Strongbow isn't happy over how he and Peter Maivia are developing as a tag team. The two men are taking a long time to get their maneuvers coordinated. I was standing back, trying to be as invisible as possible, when WWWF president Willie Gilzenberg told friends he might order Superstar Billy Graham to put his title on the line against Mil Mascaras. Nobody wanted to volunteer to tell Graham. I can't blame them any. Hell, you really can't blame anyone for anything. I tried to hate Lou Albano and his new rulebreaker, Golden Terror, but it took too much energy.

CHICAGO: I got ambushed by a couple of scotches before making it to the arena. Gave the evening a hard edge, which is perfect for this city. First thing you hear is a Nick Bockwinkle rumor. It's also the last thing you hear. Bockwinkle hates Heenan. Bockwinkle loves Heenan. Choose one. Smart money leans toward hate. A few hotshot shysters are supposedly checking out the contract, seeing if it can be broken. I haven't seen the contract, but I know Heenan. There's no way out for Bockwinkle. Speaking of money, Lord Al Hays makes more as a manager than he ever did as a wrestler. There's a lesson to be learned there.

TAMPA: Don Muraco shoots from the hip lately. He doesn't seem to care whom he hurts or helps. Guys who get embroiled in feuds often wind up that way. Another troubled guy is Jack Brisco. Moody all the

time. Doesn't want anyone's help. It must be a problem only he can solve. I mind my own business when I can. Word of warning: house bourbon is lousy all over Tampa.

ATLANTA: Interesting night. Ric Flair offered me \$2,000 to say something good about him in my column. I'll do it for free: Flair is very generous with his bribes. I was still



BLACKJACK MULLIGAN

thinking of what could be bought with the \$2,000 I didn't get when someone made it a point to tell me Blackjack Mulligan doesn't count me among his friends. Seems I once signed a petition to ban the clawhold, Mulligan's favorite maneuver. Well, I didn't take this job to win a popularity contest. Besides, no one ever put too high a value on Mulligan's friendship. The only thing I take seriously is getting home safely before dawn.

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

HOUSTON: It's hot, humid, and the air-conditioner makes too much noise. Terry Funk doesn't notice. The man's a wounded animal, scared dangerous. Everyone is his enemy. People keep their distance from Funk at all times. When it comes to survival, people can be pretty smart. I was thinking about this and what people with regular jobs do at this time of night when Jose Lothario asked me if I wanted a lift to the motel. He sounded like he wanted to talk. Driving down the highway, the wrestler asked if I thought his fans were disappointed because he hasn't won the NWA title. I told him his fans love him for who he is, not what he does. Jose seemed satisfied with the answer. He didn't say anything more. It was his car, so I shut up too.

DENVER: People look too healthy around here. Maybe that's why you can't get a decent martini. Greg Gagne doesn't drink martinis, but that's okay with me. The kid wants to be champion, which isn't a bad ambition for a kid. "My whole life is dedicated to winning the title," he said. He

meant it. "I spend four hours a day in the gym and the rest of my time is devising strategies. I don't keep in touch with friends much anymore." Those are the sacrifices a man makes when he wants to be a champion. Well, I don't have many friends and I don't want to be anything.



KEN PATERA

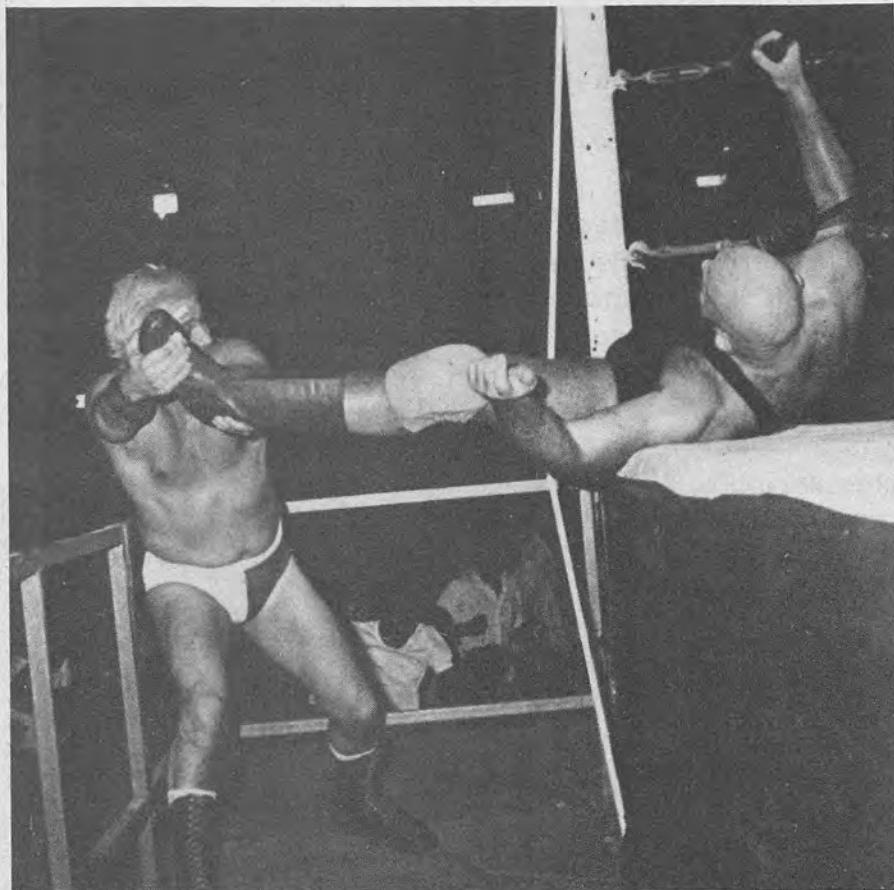
BANGOR: Everyone has a lobster dinner around here. I wasn't hungry. Still, I was in better shape than Ken Patera. He doesn't trust manager Lou Albano. Not trusting your manager can make a man nervous. Is Albano setting up Patera? Could be. Another possibility on a different subject: Tony Garea is looking to leave the country. The kid seems to be homesick for New Zealand. It takes all kinds to make a world. I was in New Zealand during World War II. Even the Nazis couldn't get me back again. Something else I can't figure: If Larry Zbyszko is supposed to be such a nice guy, why do I find myself not trusting him? Maybe I've been around too long. It wouldn't be my first mistake.

Be back next month. 'Til then, you know where to find me. □



GREG GAGNE

Pat Patterson has learned what most other wrestlers know—never trust Ivan Koloff. Now Pat's entire career has changed. Patterson has only one goal: avenge himself with Koloff's blood!



Above: Blood pours down Ivan Koloff's head as the match turns into an ugly bloodbath. Left: Patterson tries to drag Koloff out of the ring as Ivan holds onto the rope for dear life.

PHOTOS BY PAUL BAUMAN

"IVAN KOLOFF STABBED ME"

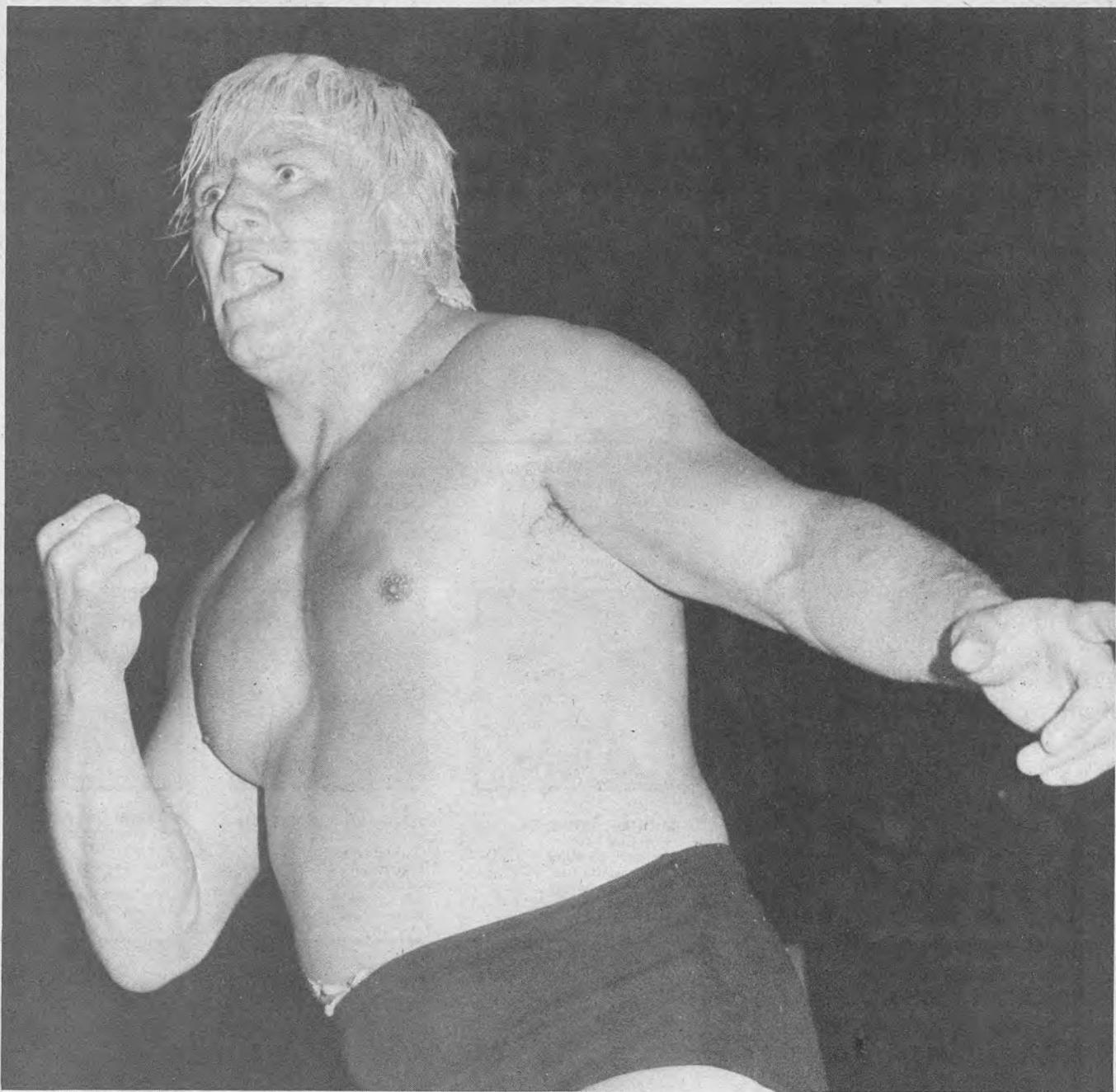
THE FOG LEFT droplets across the window, making the world outside seem like an undefined haze. The motel room couldn't protect the bones against dampness, and Pat Patterson poured still another cup of coffee from his thermos. It was the kind of day sad people spend lying in bed, staring at the ceiling, deciding they don't want to go anywhere else.

Patterson didn't want to go anywhere or see anyone. Less than 12 hours before, his career had lost direction. Before the catastrophe, he was Ivan Koloff's tag team partner. They were tearing up the competition. Patterson found it easy to learn Koloff's rulebreaking tactics. They were incredibly successful. Tag teams of all types fell to their savagery. Patterson

found his principles about fair play didn't bother him when he was winning.

Then it happened. When you play with fire, plan on getting burned. Koloff is fire. Patterson got burned.

It was a rough night all around. The two men entered the arena yelling at each other. Koloff wanted things done his way.



IN THE BACK!"

Patterson realized Koloff's way meant Pat took all the risks while Ivan garnered the glory. Patterson is nobody's fall guy. Nothing had been determined by the time the bell rang.

It was a ferocious battle. The fact that Koloff and Patterson were mixing like oil and water didn't help any. When things like that happen, opponents take

advantage:

So it naturally came to pass that Patterson was in trouble. His foes worked him over hard and long. His only salvation lay in Koloff tagging him. Ivan looked the other way.

Patterson grew enraged. Ignoring his official opponents, he went after Koloff. The two wrestlers slugged it out, frustration

and anger driving them to terrifying brutality. When the battle was over, the partners were enemies.

Hours after the debacle, Patterson lay on his motel bed. What was the future? Did he go it on his own? He had to get revenge. Destroying Koloff, that's the important thing. Teach that

(Continued on page 52)

**For Wrestling Fans
Everywhere From 6 to 60
... EVERYBODY can join
in on the fun . . . There's
nothing to buy!**

If you join "The Wonderful World of Pen Pals," you can make new friends throughout the world. And all of your new pen pals will be wrestling fans too! We will print your picture right here in this magazine, and also a little bit of information about who you are. That way, your new pen pals will know something about you even before they start to send you their letters! Just think—you can have the chance to receive mail from all over the world! All you have to do is fill out the coupon below and mail it to us, along with a recent picture. We'll take it from there.

PHOTOS CANNOT BE RETURNED!

**PEN PALS DEPT.
Box 48
Rockville Centre, NY 11571**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Hobbies, other interests _____

Favorite Wrestler _____

I like Good Guys Bad Guys

I'd Like As My Pen Pal:

Boys Girls Anyone

You Have My Permission To Print My Picture.

Age _____

**Signature Required
DO NOT PRINT**

the Wonderful World of PE



DONNIE BARBOUR (14)
Pine Line Trailer Ct.
Lot 13
Lynchburg, VA 24501
Enjoys hunting. Greg Valentine his favorite.
Likes bad guys. Girls for pen pals.



TOM FARTHING (27)
P.O. Box 535
Carrier Mills, IL 62917
Likes camping. Mil Mascaras his favorite.
Likes good and bad guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



PAIGE McCABE (13)
2819 So. River Rd.
Janesville, WI 53545
Enjoys water skiing. Crusher her favorite. Likes good guys. Anyone for pen pals.



MICHAEL KRUSE (9)
Rt 1, Box 136
Wallace, MI 49893
Likes models. The Bruiser his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Boys for pen pals.



TOM MARINOVICH (11)
101-16 112 St
Richmond Hill, NY 11419
Enjoys fishing. Bruno Sammartino his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Boys for pen pals.



JOSEPH CATANIA (14)
481 Hartman St.
Brooklyn, NY 11237
Likes sports. Bruno Sammartino his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



BRIAN SMITH (9)
215 Shelton Ct.
Barnhart, MO 63012
Enjoys swimming. Gene Kiniski his favorite.
Likes bad guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



CHARLES BROWN (15)
5522 Gilmore Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63120
Enjoys sports. Jack Brisco his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Girls for pen pals.



PHILIP COGAR (15)
41 Hubble Pl.
Milford, CT 06460
Likes football. Ivan Putski his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



JOEHANN CORREA (7)
94-16 34 Rd.
Jackson Heights, NY 11372
Enjoys swimming. Bruno Sammartino his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



JULIAN CORREA (11)
94-16 34 Rd.
Jackson Heights, NY 11372
Enjoys swimming. Ivan Putski his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



FRANK COLASURDO (12)
2599 Nassau Ave.
Wantagh, NY 11793
Likes all sports. Mighty Igor his favorite. Likes good guys. Boys for PP's.

N PALS



ROLANDO AMATO (14)
2314 No. Avers
Chicago, IL 60647
Likes baseball. Mil
Mascara his favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone
for pen pals.



MIKE BRUCE (12)
1427 Lanewood
Dixon, IL 61021
Enjoys fishing. Andre
the Giant his favorite.
Likes good and bad guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



JEFF PRIVETT (17)
P.O. Box 46
Revelo, KY 42638
Likes softball. Paul
Jones his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Girls for pen pals.



JIM LICHNOVSKY (10)
907 No. 60th St.
Waco, TX 76710
Enjoys fishing. Bruiser
Brodie his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



VICTOR WALLACE (10)
134 4th St.
Sakeston, MO 63801
Enjoys skating. Terry
Funk his favorite. Likes
good and bad guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



RALPH SOLOMONE (11)
199-17 17th Ave.
Whitestone, NY 11357
Enjoys music. Tony
Garea his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



JOHN GARDNER (17)
P.O. Box 2340
Sanford, NC 27330
Enjoys TV. Wahoo
McDaniel his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Boys for pen pals.



ESEQUIEL JASSO (12)
10101 Ave. L
Chicago, IL 60617
Likes football. Chavo
Guerrero his favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Anyone for PP's.



REGGIE PICKETT (15)
129-14 134 St.
Ozone Park, NY 11420
Likes animals. Ivan
Putski his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Girls for pen pals.



BOBBY LESLIE (17)
1517 So. 2nd St.
Salisbury, NC 28144
Likes tennis. Ric
Flair his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



GEORGE STODDARD (13)
RD #4
Honesdale, PA 18431
Likes model building.
Bruno Sammartino his
favorite. Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



PETER SUGLERIS (15)
194 Talmadge St.
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Likes magic. Bruno
Sammartino his favorite.
Likes good and bad guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



MIKE HYMAN (30)
111 John St. Room 2505
New York, NY 10038
Enjoys music. Bruno
Sammartino his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



VAN WILLIAMS (8)
Rt. 1, Box 706
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Enjoys fishing. Paul
Jones his favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Boys for PP's.



RHONDA DOHONEY (14)
Bruce Trailer Park
Box 33
Rockport, IN 47635
Likes baseball. Bill
Dundee her favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Girls for PP's.



EDDIE AUGUSTINE (12)
3869 Old Forge Rd.
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
Likes baseball. Wahoo
McDaniel his favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Boys for PP's.



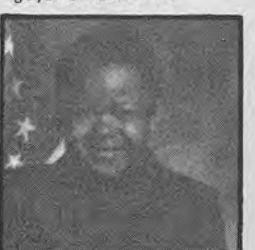
ALAN SHOEMAKER (18)
109 E. Ganson
Jackson, MI 49201
Likes to bowl. Don
Kent his favorite.
Likes bad guys. Anyone
for pen pals.



MARY JABTERAKES (13)
8 Knowles St.
Pawtucket, RI 02860
Enjoys swimming. Larry
Zbyszko her favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



AUDREY JIM (10)
Box 70
Mexican Spring, NM 87320
Enjoys swimming. Terry
Funk her favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



ANTHONY THOMPSON (10)
Rte 9, Box 293 B
Anderson, SC 29621
Enjoys ice skating. Andre
the Giant his favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone
for pen pals.

These are the times that try men's souls. Wrestling must be saved from the plague of rulebreakers. Bob Backlund can be the savior. We're willing to pay \$100,000 to make sure he has the chance to try

Superstar Graham vs. Bob Backlund:



INSIDE WRESTLING'S \$100,0

BY THE EDITORS

FOR THE GOOD of wrestling, we're willing to add \$100,000 to the purse of the first Bob Backlund challenge to Superstar Billy Graham's WWWF title. The fortune will go to the winner.

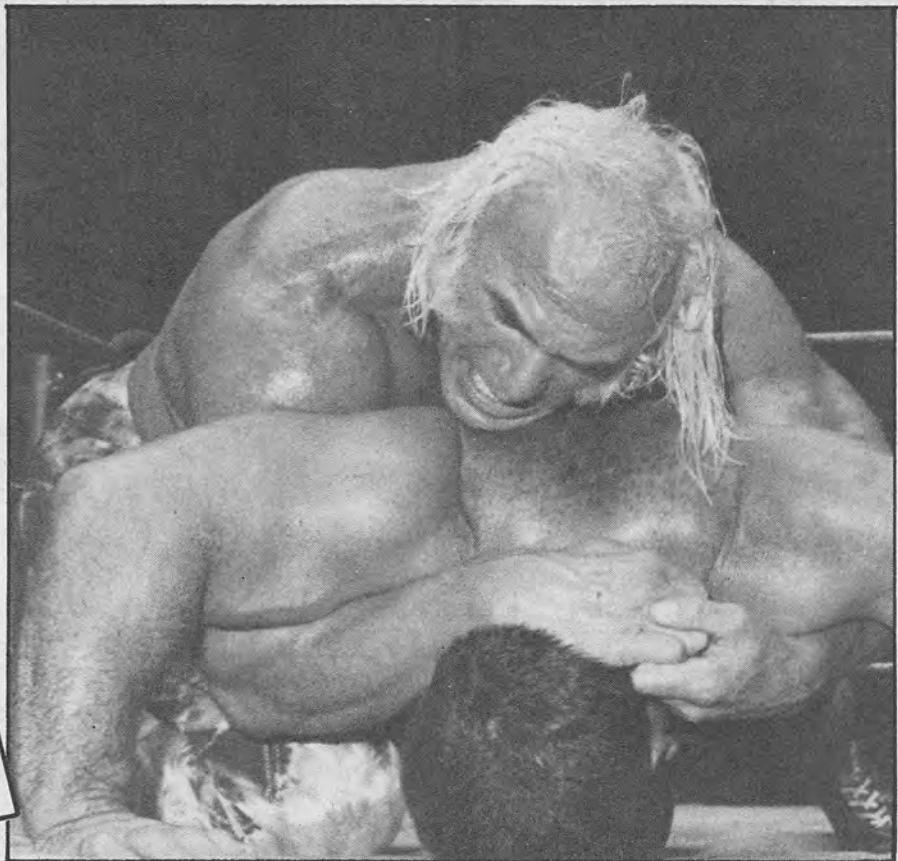
We are making this unique offer to goad Graham into accepting Backlund's challenge. We willingly admit we hope Bob defeats Graham and becomes the new champion.

Graham's record has been a study in rulebreaking cruelty. The men he has tortured and maimed are among the finest athletes anywhere. The terror he wields cannot be underestimated.

Everyone is familiar with young Bob Backlund's exemplary record. Straight from college, Bob captured the hearts of wrestling fans with his superb display of wrestling virtuosity. His scientific reputation is second to none. He'd be a credit to the WWWF championship and wrestling everywhere.

Wrestling needs an honest champion now, more than it ever has. We have scoured the field, and we think Backlund has a better chance against Graham than anyone else. Instead of all three major champions being rulebreakers, as exists today, there would be Bob as a beacon hope to everyone who loves this sport. Other wrestlers would take hope and continue to wrestle cleanly in their title quests.

A successful scientific wrestler is very important today. More and



A full-nelson brings Ivan Putski to the canvas. Superstar Billy Graham's awesome strength and agility has conquered every challenger for the WWF title belt. Bob Backlund may be the only man in wrestling who can neutralize Graham's strength and successfully defeat the notorious champion.

plague. If everyone turns into ruthless animals, the sport will become as violent, and potentially as deadly, as Roman gladiatorial combat. And like the Roman gladiators, these wrestlers will also have no place in a civilized society. If the present increase in violence continues, wrestling will be deemed barbaric by society's watchdogs and ultimately banned.

If wrestling is banned, this magazine will go out of business. Naturally, we're willing to make a \$100,000 investment to stay alive. This offer is not solely for the good of wrestling. Our livelihood, and the survival of our families, is at stake. The state of wrestling directly effects us. That's why we must do anything in our power to save it.

Some may say we're overreacting to the situation. They believe that since wrestling has survived for 3,000 years, it will continue to do so. They don't examine history closely enough. There have been many instances throughout history

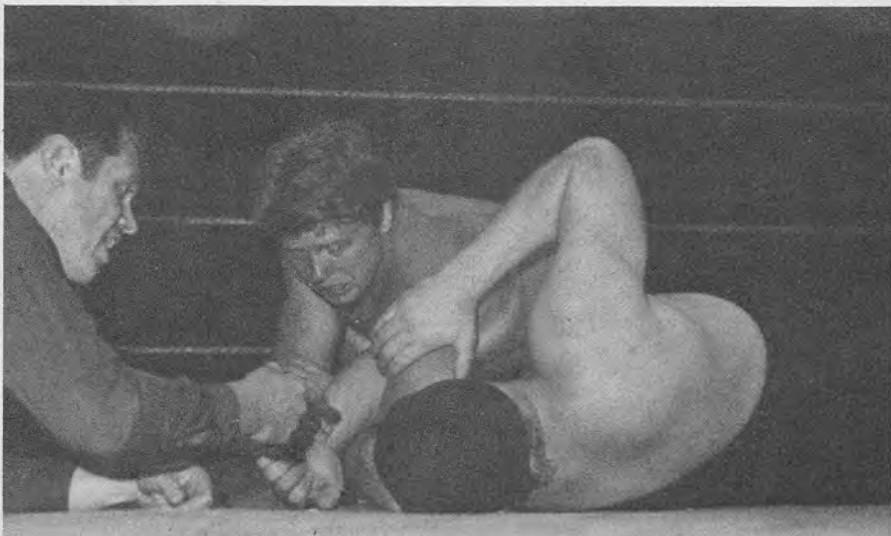
(Continued on page 58)

OO GAMBLE

more, formerly scientific mat stars are turning to rulebreaking because, as one turncoat said recently, "you can't argue with success." Young wrestlers entering the sport are choosing to be rulebreakers because that seems to be the way to a title. Backlund's presence can show that theory is a lie.

We think our livelihood is also threatened by this rulebreaking

Bob Backlund strains to put an armlock on Executioner #2. Bob has proven he can take the big guys.



INSIDE WRESTLING'S

RAW FACTS

These Ratings Are Compiled With The Assistance Of Top Wrestlers, Promoters, And Reporters. They Are Universally Accepted As Official

World Wide Wrestling Federation



Champion:
SUPERSTAR GRAHAM



1—BOB BACKLUND

American Wrestling Association



Champion:
NICK BOCKWINKLE



1—BILLY ROBINSON

National Wrestling Alliance



Champion:
HARLEY RACE



1—ROCKY JOHNSON

Most Popular Wrestlers



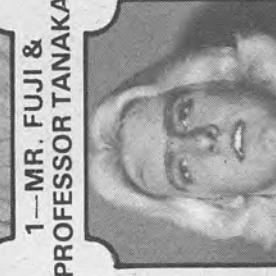
1—ANDRE THE
GIANT



1—MR. FUJI &
PROFESSOR TANAKA

2—DUSTY RHODES

Tag Teams



1—KEN PATERA

2—RIC FLAIR

Most Hated Wrestlers



2—RIC FLAIR



3—SUPERSTAR
GRAHAM



2—RIC FLAIR &
GREG VALENTINE



4—GREG VALENTINE



5—STAN HANSEN



3—BOB BACKLUND



4—Ivan PUTSKI



3—GREG GAGNE &
JIM BRUNZELL

4—THE ANDERSON
BROTHERS

5—PAUL JONES &
RICK STEAMBOAT

6—THE VALIANT
BROTHERS

7—IVAN KOLOFF &
MR. SAITO

8—JACK & JERRY
BRISCO

9—CHIEF STRONG-
BOW & PETER MAIVIA
10—JOSE LOTHARIO
& ALBERTO MADRIL



2—TERRY FUNK



3—RIC FLAIR



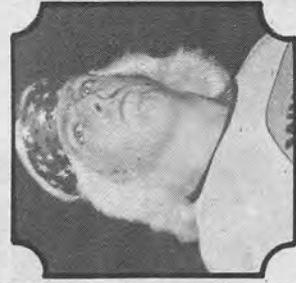
5—MIL MASCARAS

6—PAUL JONES
7—CHIEF JAY
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8—JIMMY SNUKA
9—BILLY ROBINSON
10—RICK
STEAMBOAT



2—RAY STEVENS



3—VERNE GAGNE



4—DUSTY RHODES

5—DICK SLATER
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10—RICK
STEAMBOAT



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5—KEN PATERA
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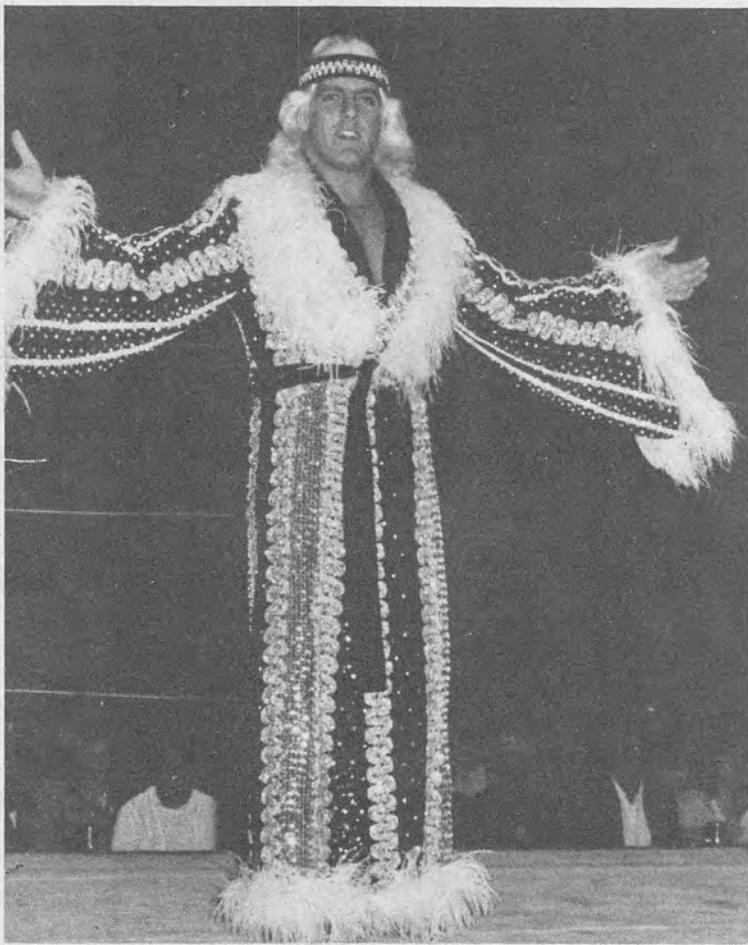
4—Ivan PUTSKI



5—KEN PATERA
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Why Ric Flair Says



"NOW I'M THE AMERICAN DREAM!"

REPORTERS WERE GIVING 5-1 odds Ric Flair wouldn't even leave the dressing room. The controversial grappler had just been driven from the ring by

Dusty Rhodes. "At least we can hear his excuse for not giving an interview," they agreed while walking toward the dressing room.

To everyone's amazement, Flair stood in the middle of the dressing room, grinning like a beamish boy. "Aha," he
(Continued on page 62)

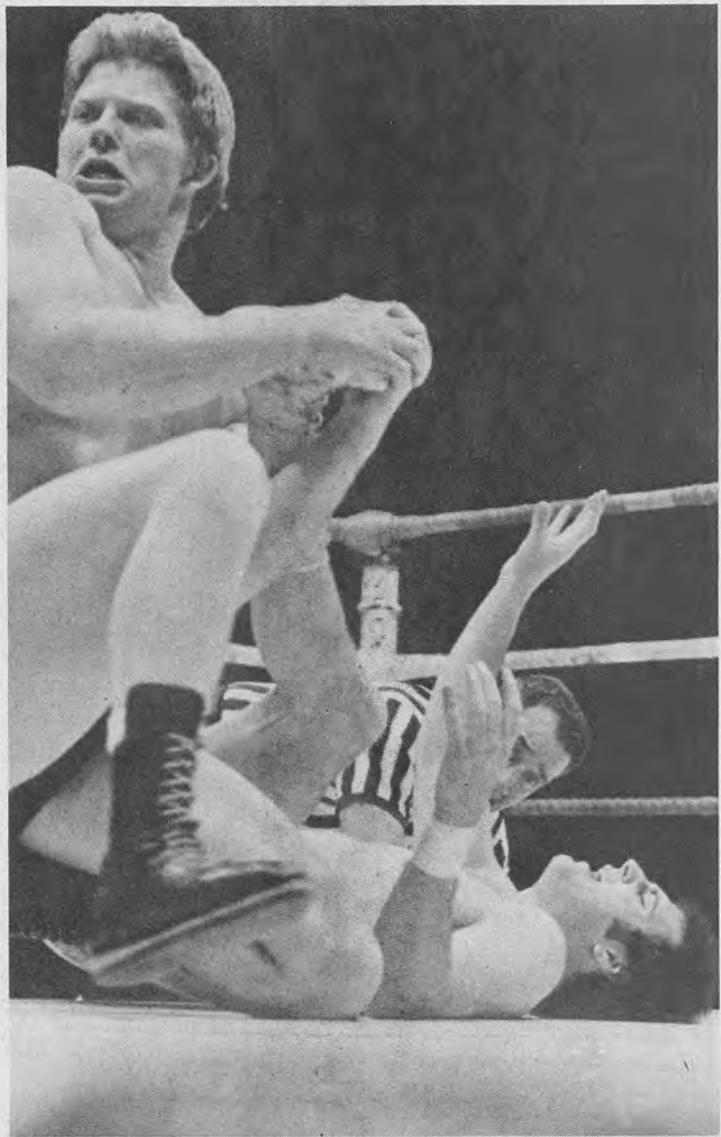
Dusty Rhodes made Ric Flair turn tail and run. Yet, moments after the match, Flair announces not only his superiority but also his right to be called the "American Dream." To understand this astonishing turn of events, read this story very carefully

INSIDE WRESTLING

20

CAPSULE PROFILE

BOB BACKLUND

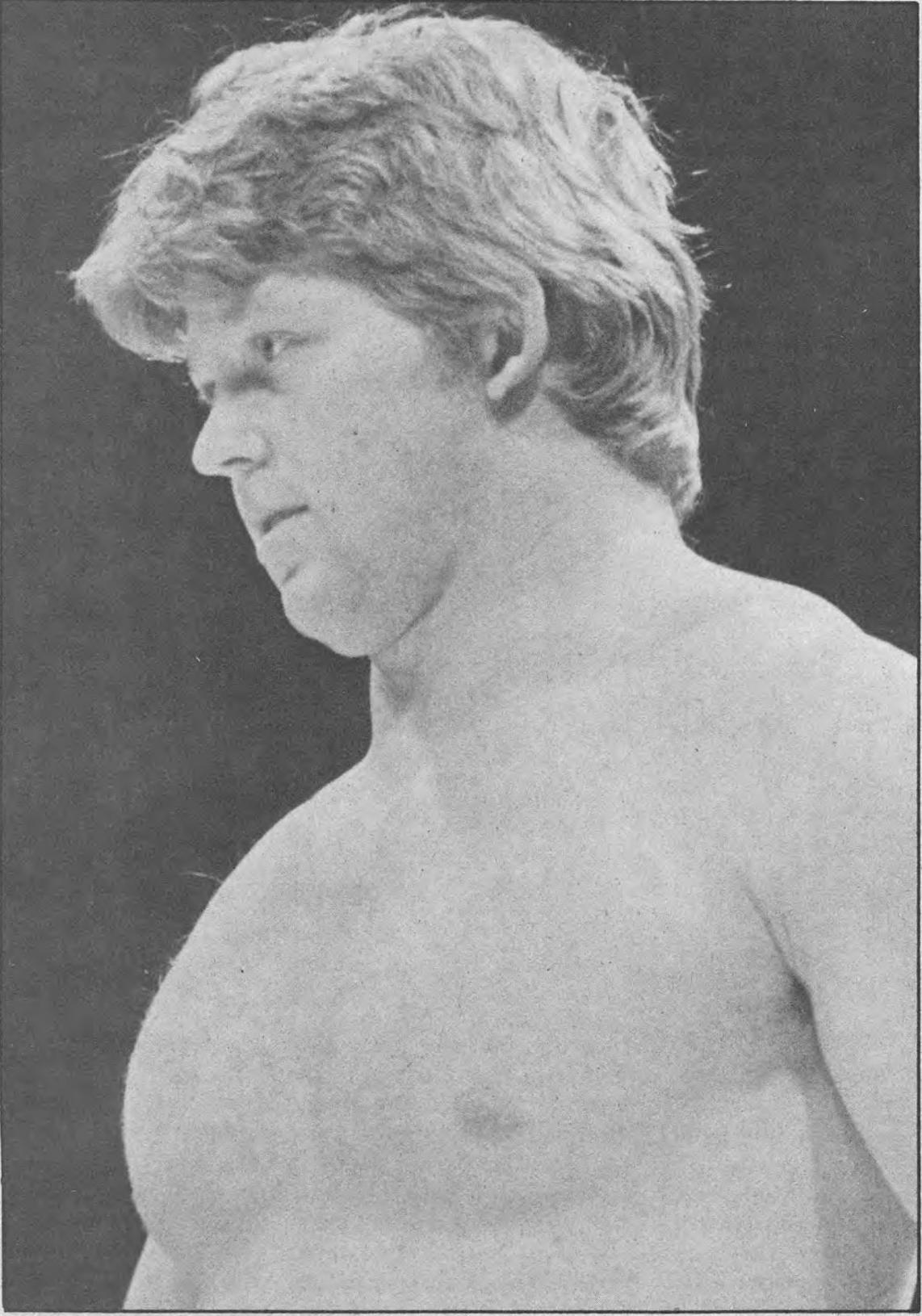


HE HAS BECOME the most sensational wrestler in the entire sport...No other man has achieved so much in so short a time...He has already defeated many of the sport's top stars...Although he is now considered to be one of the all-time greats, he claims he is still learning (*A man must never stop learning. Otherwise, he goes backwards*)...His greatest asset is his

blinding, cat-like speed...In addition, he is also one of the strongest men in wrestling...Complex maneuvers pose no problem to this young superstar (*"I enjoy executing complex moves. I think it's what makes the sport great!"*)...A glorious amateur career well-prepared this young man for the rigors of pro wrestling...Many experts believe he can be called the best wrestler in the world

today (*I would like to believe that, but I think I still have a ways to go yet.*)...As a rookie, he won the coveted Missouri State belt from Harley Race...Bobby's spirit-lifting enthusiasm and boyish good looks have made him the most popular wrestler since Bruno Sammartino turned pro in 1958...A future champion, Bobby Backlund should be atop the wrestling world for years to come. □

CAPSULE PROFILE PIN-UP



BOB BACKLUND

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Each day, out of the thousands of letters we receive, hundreds of them are from fans asking the whereabouts of their favorite wrestler. In this special column, we will try to answer the questions you ask the most!



BOB ROOP

Former Olympic and NCAA champion Bob Roop is currently wreaking havoc among the grapplers of the bay area of San Francisco. Big Bob, who brings a new meaning to the word rulebreaker, has built up a huge reputation in a relatively short period. "I'm so loved out here," reports Bob, "the mayor is thinking of changing the name of the Golden Gate Bridge to the Robert Roop Bridge!"

SPIROS ARION

Spiros Arion, one of the most hated wrestlers ever in the WWWF territory, has returned to that very area. He is once again managed by Freddie Blassie. Arion and Blassie have hopes of climbing the ratings over the broken bodies of such fan favorites as Ivan Putski, Bob Backlund, and Chief Jay Strongbow. Spiros, who looks in excellent shape, is undefeated as of this writing.



ERNIE LADD

The highly-controversial Ernie Ladd is now active in his hometown of Houston, Texas. Believe it or not, the volatile Big Cat is being cheered by the fans! And why not—he's wrestling men like Killer Brooks and Bull Ramos. Just how long Ernie's love affair with the fans lasts remains to be seen. Ladd has been known to stab partners and fans in the back.

BUDDY ROGERS

Although Buddy Rogers has been out of wrestling for more than 10 years, we still receive a great deal of mail asking his whereabouts. Buddy, who was the only man in history to win both the NWA and WWWF world titles, is a highly successful businessman in New Jersey. When last we spoke to him, he asked us to say hello to all the fans who remember him.



HOTSEAT

ROCKY JOHNSON: “MY LIFE IS ON THE LINE IN EVERY MATCH!”

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY PETER KING

HE IS HIGHLY regarded throughout the wrestling community. His skills make him one of the best, bar none. The fans love him. The wrestlers respect him. He will do anything for the fans; all they have to do is ask him. From his humble beginnings in Toronto, Ontario, he has risen to the top of his profession. He is the "Soulman," Rocky Johnson.

- Q: Good evening, Rocky.
A: Good to be here, good to be here.
Q: Rock, you look kind of tired. Is anything the matter?
A: Well, my man, let me tell you. I love wrestling, but sometimes it becomes too much. So many guys I gotta beat, and as soon as I beat them, a whole other bunch of guys pop up. It just never seems to end.

Q: It sounds like that ancient Greek myth about the man who keeps pushing a heavy rock up a hill . . .

A: Yeah, I know that one. And soon as it gets near the top of the hill, the rock slides all the way back to the bottom. And the dude's got to start all

against, well, really the top stars in the business. Guys like Koloff, Ernie Ladd, Lars Anderson. Why?

A: Hey, what's a man for if not to battle the best. I know how hard it is. You think I like climbing in that squared circle every night against a guy like Koloff or Anderson? No way!

Q: Rocky, you still haven't answered the question. Why do you do it? What keeps you going?

A: Well, this may sound corny, but it's the truth. You want to know what keeps the Soulman going? It's the fans. I do it for them.

Q: There are many here among us who feel you've already paid back your fans hundreds of times over.

A: Never! If it wasn't for those people, ol' Rocky might be driving some fish truck up in Toronto. I still owe them a lot. Everything.

Q: But Rocky, noboby expects

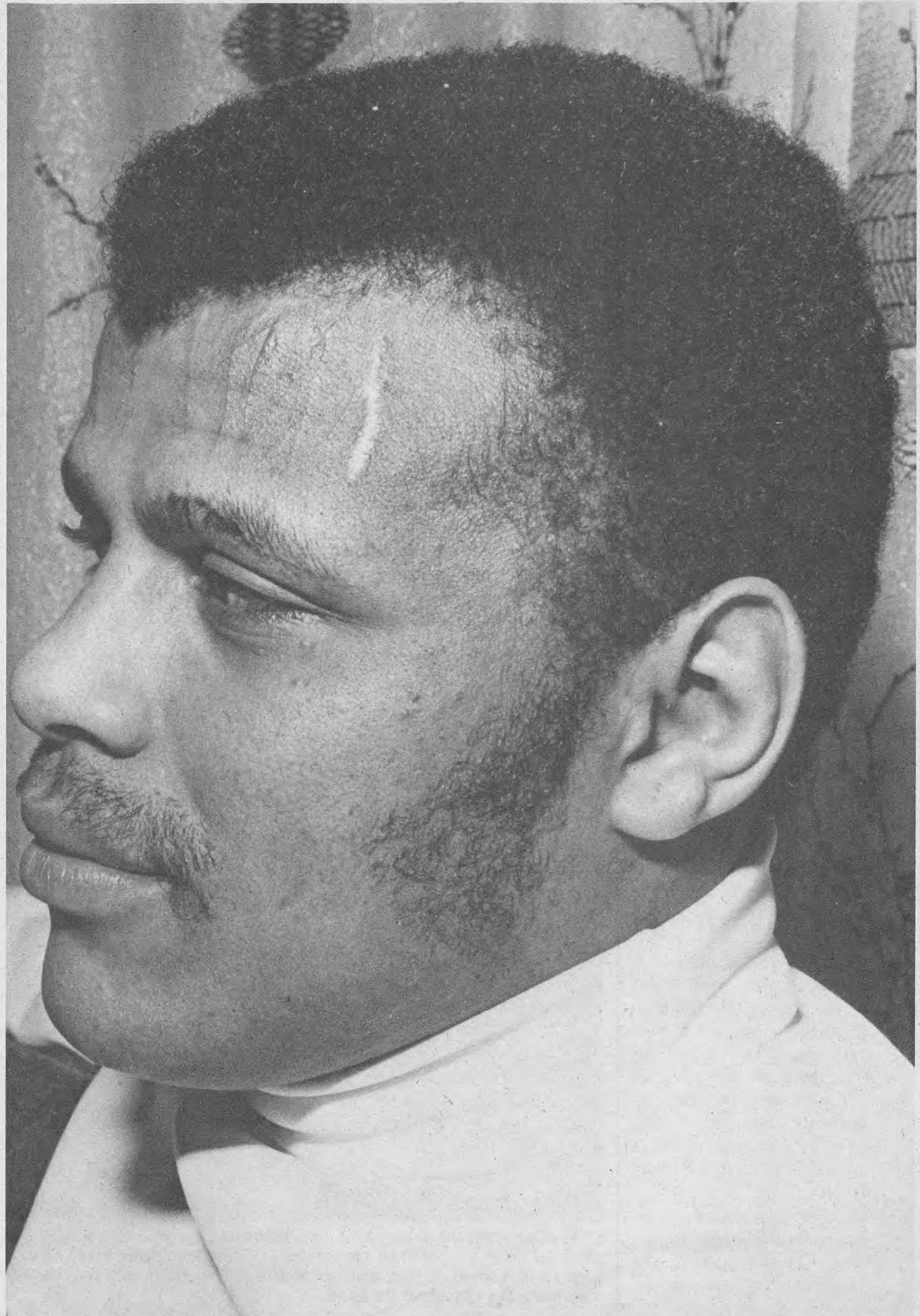
“

This may sound corny, but it's the truth. You want to know what keeps the Soulman going? It's the fans. I do it for them.

”

over again. Ha! My man, that sure does sound like ol' Rocky!

Q: Rocky, you constantly seek out guys the fans really despise. Instead of taking it slow, you always seem to find yourself in raging feuds





‘‘

Well, all I know is this. Every time I step through those ropes, my life is on the line. It may not be the most healthy way to think, but it's my way.

’’

you to give up your life for them.

A: Well, all I know is this. Every time I step through those ropes, my life is on the line. It may not be the most healthy way to think, but it's my way.

Q: Rocky, a lot of guys—too many—have had your philosophy only to burn themselves out at a very early age. You know the type, guys who go great for one or two years and then suddenly find they don't have it anymore. Is this a possibility for Rocky Johnson?

A: Hell of a question, Jack. Hell of a question! No, my man. That's not gonna happen to the Soulman.

Q: Why?

A: First of all, I'm not one of those 30 day wonders you're talking about. I've been a top star for nearly 10 years now. If anything, the past two or three years have been my most successful. Plus I train every day. I keep this ol' body in tip-top shape. You check on those guys who burned themselves out. You know what you're gonna find? Ten out of 10 times they let their bodies go. You stop trainin', and you stop winnin'!

Q: Rocky, nobody has come closer than you have to winning the NWA belt from Harley Race. As a matter of fact, you also came within a hair of taking the title when Terry Funk had it.

A: Man, there goes my dinner! You've just mentioned two names in one sentence that would make a billy goat sick

to his stomach. Race and Funk. You call these clowns champions?

Q: I don't, but that's not important. What is important is that Funk was NWA king and Race is the main man now.

A: Yeah, you're right, but ain't that a crime. I tell you, I could beat Harley any day of the week. But he's got so much going for him. Man, I never saw anyone take advantage of technicalities like he does. That dude knows a hundred-and-one ways to lose a bout but hold on to his belt.

Q: We called Race's recent title match against you his most disgraceful battle. What did you think of it?

A: My man, if I told you what I really think, this interview would be rated triple X. For one hour Harley ran from



Rocky works on the arm of Terry Funk. This match took place when Funk held the NWA crown and Rocky was one of his top challengers. Today, with Harley Race NWA king, Rocky remains one of the most important challengers. His superb skills and virtuosity make him a star throughout the world.



Rocky leaps high over Dory Funk Jr. during one of their many matches. When these two superb athletes battle, it's always exciting.

me. Hell, I thought the dude might by trying out for the 1980 Olympics—as a member of the track team. He sure enough couldn't qualify for the wrestling team.

Q: How about a rematch against Race?

A: Yeah, how about it? You tell me. Lord knows I've tried to get the man to sign on the dotted line. But he says he's busy. Busy runnin', I bet.

Q: In other words, Rocky, you're saying Harley Race is afraid of you.

A: My man, those words are just fine. Allow me to say it. Harley Race is afraid of me. And, I might add, with good reason.

Q: There's no doubt you have the perfect style to defeat Race.

A: Absolutely. The dude has trouble making it against guys who can move. Now, don't get me wrong. Ol' Harley ain't slow. But he's not exactly faster than a speeding bullet either.

Q: If and when you get a rematch with Race, how would

you wrestle him? What would your game plan be.

A: Actually, I might try something a little different. I think I'd take him on strength for strength for the first nine or 10 minutes. Then, Ol' Rocky will take to the air.

Q: Dropkicks and the like?

A: Right on! Dropkicks, flying body blocks, flying head-scissors, stuff like that. After having his endurance sapped a little, Harley can't move at all. He'll be a sitting duck for an aerial attack.

Q: What if he tries to run again?

A: Next time, if he tries that tune, I'm gonna climb out of the ring, pick that ol' butterball up, and throw him back inside the ropes. Like they say, he can run, but he can't hide.

Q: Good luck.

A: Thank you. By the way, you're invited to my victory party.

Q: Rocky, you win the title and the entire staff of this magazine will be there.

A: That's cool, but I wouldn't mind if you left Dan Shocket home.

Q: Okay Rocky, but realistically, that's all somewhere in the future. Let's talk about now. Once again, you're the most popular grappler in Florida.

A: Well, like we said before, I'm doin' it for my fans.

Q: What do you think of Lars Anderson?

A: Man, that dude is worse than Adolf Hitler.

Q: Worse than Hitler!?

A: Yeah. At least the Fuehrer could dance!

Q: I take it you don't like Mr. Anderson.

A: You can take that to the bank.

Q: And Ivan Koloff?

A: Him you can take to Siberia. Honestly though, he's a good wrestler . . . but a rotten



Ivan Koloff is a good wrestler . . . but a rotten human being. If I could somehow get him out of wrestling, it would rank as one of my greatest achievements. That dude has ended the career of too many of my friends.

99

human being. If I could somehow get Ivan Koloff out of wrestling, it would rank as one of my greatest achievements. That dude has ended the career of too many of my friends.

Q: Anderson, Koloff, Race . . . it sounds as if the Soulman has his hands full for the time being.

A: Yeah, my man, it looks that way. But what the hell. It's my life. And when those fans cheer, Jack, it makes the pain, the aching, the blood, worthwhile. Ol' Rocky does it all for his fans.

Q: Thanks for the interview. Rocky. You're something else!

A: Hey, thanks for the invite. And I am only what I am! □

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THIS CHILD WILL MAKE ANDRE CHAMPION

(Continued from Page 23)



Andre raises his hands high in the air after a hard-won victory. Whether or not he could have won without the child's insight is questionable. The fact remains Andre is wrestling with more authority than ever before.

Every field of endeavor has had its prodigies. Music had Mozart and Beethoven. Chess has Bobby Fischer. Physics had Einstein. Literature had Arthur Rimbaud and Carson McCullers. Now wrestling has this young lad. He will someday earn a place of honor in the annals of wrestling history. Of course, his success is directly linked to Andre's success. If the boy can lead the wrestler to a title, he will be appropriately honored. It

SPECIAL BACK ISSUES

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would be only a small gesture toward what he deserves.

Many wrestlers envy Andre this small boy. After all, the child will only devise his strategies for Andre. No other wrestler has been given the benefit of his wisdom. This is because the boy was, is, and always will be an Andre the Giant fan. Indeed, that is how this unlikely pair got together in the first place.

The boy's father works at the Richmond Coliseum. The child has been going to wrestling shows for the past two years. Early on, he became an Andre the Giant fan. Before a match one night, the boy convinced his father to let him meet Andre. The father agreed and took his son to the dressing room area. What



Andre's full weight comes crashing down on Volkoff. Since meeting the boy, Andre is more reckless.

happened next shall be remembered by everyone involved for a long time.

After the boy overcame his natural shyness (being so close to his idol), he started talking about the match Andre was about to wrestle. The boy suggested that Andre use certain maneuvers in a certain order. If Andre followed his

(Continued on page 46)



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THIS CHILD WILL MAKE ANDRE CHAMPION

(Continued from Page 45)

suggestions, the boy said, he would win the match.

The wrestler's initial reaction was to dismiss this as the talk of a child. Then he thought about just what the boy was saying. It seemed logical. It made sense. Andre would never have devised such a strategy himself, but it might be worth a try.

In less than five minutes, Andre had soundly defeated his



Above: Andre's great strength is used to its limit against Abdullah the Butcher. Left: Andre smashes away at Nick Bockwinkle. Below: Andre uses his weight for leverage against mat star Antonio Inoki.



opponent. He had used the small boy's plan. It had worked perfectly. The rest, as they say, is history.

It should never be thought that Andre cannot devise these strategies on his own. He is not able to rely on the prodigy's advice too often since the boy cannot travel to meet the wrestler's busy schedule. Most of the time, Andre uses his own strategies. But for an especially tough opponent, Andre relies on the boy. For some reason, the youngster can devise plans of attack which would be beyond most seasoned veterans. According to experts who have analyzed these plans, they are brilliant. How does a five-year-old boy do it? No one knows. It is his own special talent, and he uses it exclusively for his idol.

It is no secret that Andre the Giant wants a world title. He has already tried to win the belts in the AWA and the NWA. He has stated on several occasions he is going to keep trying until he succeeds. And anyone who knows Andre knows he is a very determined man. He will get what he wants . . . with a little help from a little person.

The child prodigy is ready and waiting with advice for Andre on how to wrestle any of the three world champions. He knows what each man's weaknesses are, and how Andre can exploit these deficiencies. So far, however, the boy's plans are unusable; Andre has not had a shot at a title in a while.

There will come a day when Andre will call upon his brilliant young fan, asking him for advice on what he should do in a title match. There can be no doubt that this advice will be brilliant. Andre will follow this advice (like he has before). He will have the belt he so craves. And he will owe a debt of gratitude to one small boy. □

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BEHIND THE DOOR

(Continued from Page 10)

drove to the other end of the set, only to see "me" standing there and waving to him.

Before the "Car Lift" event, Patera was practicing lifting the 2,100-pound automobile. He was doing better than anybody else. Ken was just walking over to the car and lifting it as if it were made of paper. But during the actual events, my brother and I stood together along the sidelines and called to Ken. When he saw us together, his



eyes nearly popped out of his head. Patera was so psyched out, that he barely was able to get the car off the ground with his first lift. It was like that throughout the competition for poor Mr. Patera.

I just hope he had fun. I know I did!

Recently, I received word that the Valiants had planned to use tiny, razor-like foreign objects on Bruiser and Wilbur Snyder. Hoping to thwart their efforts, I first called the home of Bruiser in an attempt to warn him. There was no answer. I tried Snyder's home. No answer. Not wanting to rely on anybody to give Bruiser and Snyder the information, I

decided to fly out to warn them myself.

But the plane was late taking off. By the time it landed, there was only 20 minutes until the time of the match. I tried to call the arena, but the phone just rang and rang. I had to get to the arena, which was at least 30 minutes from the airport.

Hailing a cab, I begged the driver to "Please step on it!" He did, and got me to the arena in just over 25 minutes. Still, I was a few minutes too late. As I dashed through the halls of the old building, I saw two men being carried away on



stretchers. It was Bruiser and Snyder. Both had been sliced to ribbons by the merciless and ruthless Valiants. I vowed right then and there to make them pay heavily for what they had done. And you had better believe they will!

If you've been hearing and reading things about Ernie Ladd turning into a scientific wrestler, believe it. Your ears and eyes have not been letting you down. For months I've been bugging him, and lately Ernie has been

approaching wrestling from a scientific angle. Score a big victory for the good guys!

Speaking of good guys and bad guys, my rulebreaking colleague—Dan Shocket—has done something I'd like to apologize for. I was about to send out hundreds of membership cards to members of my club, "Randy's Raiders." But Dan got his hands on the master list and the only copy of it, and destroyed them both. So to all of you fans who really enjoy wrestling at its best and wanted to be a part of "Randy's Raiders," I'm truly sorry. You'll just have to write to me again. Next time Shocket does something like that, I'll break his hands.

The cries for help from the Florida area have increased, because down there, rule-breakers are running amok. Ivan Koloff, Killer Karl Kox, Lars Anderson and several other heels are threatening to ruin



Florida wrestling. Not for long, him, "Bob, you've only got a little however, because I plan to run while to change and get ready them out of the state—and for your match."

Backlund said, "I know, but I really love my fans. Being with them is the greatest thing in the world."

Before a recent match, I watched as Bob Backlund stood outside the arena and signed autographs for his fans. I said to In my book, the guy is a real champion. □

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ON THE ROAD

(Continued from Page 8)

New York recently. He hasn't changed at all. But everyone knows what Dusty is doing these days. There is no need for me to merely report what everyone knows.

Bob Backlund: Here is another person whose career needs little updating. He is doing quite well, thank you. I can report that he



seems to be enjoying himself, though this might be at the expense of other wrestlers.

Jim Brunzell and Greg Gagne: There always seems to be an aura around these two. It is as if they were very special people, set off from the rest of us. They are best friends, and they act accordingly. They are also tag team champions of the AWA.

"We're doing all right," Greg told me recently. "Jim and I still train together every day. We still see each other socially. We are still best friends. Winning the title didn't change a things for us. A friend is a friend through thick and thin."

Nice sentiments, but still too sentimental for my taste. Nothing has changed here either since last I visited.

Ken Patera: My friend Ken has gotten himself into lots of trouble since I interviewed him for this column. I talked with him recently about this. "I'm just a victim of circumstance. I do what I have to do, and I get suspended. What can you do?" From what I know of wrestling, there is not much Ken can do. He has chosen to be a



rulebreaker. There are some benefits to that course of action, and there are definite disadvantages. He doesn't like them.

Jack Brisco: The first "On the Road" interview I ever did was with Jack, so it seemed right to go back and see how he is doing.

Of all the people I've interviewed, Jack has changed the most, yet he is in exactly the same position and place he was when we spoke. He is still trying to win back the NWA title. He is still in Florida. But Jack is a completely different person. He is at peace with the world as it is. He is no longer angry at everyone. This is a definite change.

"I want back the title, but I'm not willing to sacrifice the world to get it. I will be champion again, but on my own terms. That is the way things should be."

There are other people I would like to have gone back and revisited. However, that was impossible. I enjoyed this retrospective, and I may do it again in a couple of years. It's nice to know where old friends are and how they're doing. It gives one a sense of continuity. □



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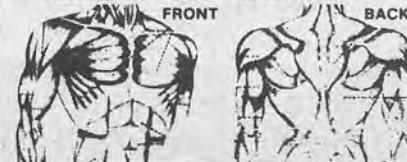
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"IVAN KOLOFF STABBED ME IN THE BACK!"

(Continued from Page 29)



Above: Pat Patterson and Ivan Koloff pose for photographers when they were the most notorious tag team in Florida. Those days seem gone for good now. Below: Patterson uses all his strength to deliver a lethal kick to Koloff's thigh. The pain is etched on Koloff's face.



Russian about loyalty and dignity.

For the first time in hours, Patterson wanted to move. He sprang from the bed and almost trotted to his car. Everyone in the immediate area heard the car tires squeal as he raced from the parking lot.

In less time (and at greater speeds) than the law allows, Patterson drove to the promoter's office. Not able to wait for the elevator, Pat bounced up the four flights four steps at a time. He rushed past the secretary, who vainly shouted to him that he couldn't go in. Through the door, Patterson

rushed up to the promoter.

"I want Koloff!" Pat shouted. "I want to beat him, and beat him scientifically. Get me the match as soon as possible!"

The promoter quickly accepted Pat's offer. The contract was quickly drawn up and signed by Patterson. Over the telephone, Koloff agreed to every term.

Before Patterson left he said, "When this one comes off, watch how I wrestle. Koloff is going to see how a scientific wrestler can be great!"

When Koloff heard of Patterson's parting sally, he vowed, "The next time I see Patterson, it will be the last time that clown enters an arena. I will destroy him!"

The battles lines drawn, the two men faced each other at opposite corners of the arena. The bell sounded. The match began.

From the beginning, it was war. Both men tore into each other as if their very lives were at stake. Fans



Patterson's powerful leglock has Ivan in serious trouble. In a matter of just a few seconds, Koloff will be helpless on the canvas.

were dumbstruck by the fury. Some spectators were actually trembling as they watched these two brawlers battle to the death.

Patterson started out as a scientific wrestler, good to his word. However, as Koloff's cheating made him more and more angry, he forgot the rules and brawled accordingly. It began to seem as if one would indeed kill the other.

Finally, when the referee felt the rules were being violated too often to be tolerated, he disqualified both men. For a moment, it seemed as if the pair would continue even though the bout was officially over. But Koloff stepped back, announced, "I'm going to get paid for killing you!" and stormed back to the dressing room. Patterson stood in the ring, ready and willing if Koloff decided to come back. But Ivan stayed away, and Pat finally went back to his own dressing room.

"I'll get even," Patterson promised reporters afterward. "Koloff betrayed me. He stabbed me in the back, left me for dead. In this business, you come down hard on people who do that. Koloff hasn't heard the last from me."

The feud has started. No one dares predict what horrors the future may hold. □

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BODYSLAMS & PINFALLS

(Continued from Page 12)

Bet the referee hated himself in the morning.

While Morales pretended to be a champion, Sammartino traveled, boring fans of all races, religions and creeds. Some people took comfort in the fact we live in a world where even the clumsy and stupid can make a living. Otherwise, the less said about this period in Bruno's career, the better.

Now we come to Bruno's second title reign. Get those barf bags ready! Stealing the title from Stan Stasiak, Sammartino went on to defend the belt against many top grapplers. To a man, they would have made better champions than Sammartino. However, none stooped to bribery and rule-breaking on Bruno's level. As Stan Hansen said, "I thought I'd do anything in the ring. Sammartino does stuff I wouldn't do to a rabid lion. He gets away with it, too. Well, you get what you pay for."

I'd like to take this space to honor the many grapplers who

tried to take Sammartino's title. These brave men, knowing the odds were almost hopelessly against them, struggled valiantly for the good of wrestling. They absorbed horrible punishment and were helpless to defend themselves. Still, knowing the



Bruno Sammartino, revered scientific wrestler, illegally chokes Stan Hansen during their classic bout.

risks, they took the challenge. Their names are too numerous to mention. Their courage will never be forgotten.

We can thank Providence for Superstar Billy Graham. A genius, he defeated Sammartino at his own game. He made sure the referee couldn't take the title away. He beautifully suckered Sammartino into position. Wrestling history will celebrate the day Bruno fell.

Since then, Sammartino has been seen less and less, for which we should all give thanks. Hopefully, his inactivity will lead to retirement. Once and for all, the worst plague ever visited on professional sports will be gone. May his name and memory soon be forgotten.

With Bruno gone, wrestling can once again flourish. Of course, referees will have to lower their standard of living considerably. □



Bruno almost breaks Stan Stasiak's arm during one of their many savage confrontations.

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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from Page 18)

BETTER MIL

Mil Mascaras is well on his way to becoming the greatest wrestler in the history of the sport. Your story, "What caused the Shocking Change in Mil Mascaras?" (December 1977), just goes to prove my contention. Who else, while riding at the crest of his popularity, would try to become even better. The man is amazing.

Now that he has perfected his aerial maneuvers, and has improved his sure-footed tactics,

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**TV SPORTS
BOX 48
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, N.Y.
11571**

does this make Mil Mascaras unbeatable? I think so. Who else has ever come close to doing what this man has done? No one, so far as I'm concerned.

Mil Mascaras is the greatest. History will prove me right.

WILLIAM ZAFFER
Evanston, Ill.

VERY INTERESTING

I found it most interesting and unusual that a Canadian like Rocky Johnson would battle a Russian like Ivan Koloff for the honor of America. But strange are the ways of the world, and that is how things happened to turn out—and it's a good thing they did, too.

Rocky Johnson has done a great service to everyone. By teaching Ivan Koloff a lesson like he did in "How Rocky Johnson Became a Martyr for America" (December 1977), he has earned a place in every American's heart.

Three cheers for Rocky Johnson, the newest American hero!

LARRY DEBNILL
Green Bay, Wisc.

GRAHAM THOUGHTS

Superstar Graham's Ugly Taunt: "Ivan Putski... You Blew It!!!!" (December 1977) got me to thinking. The WWWF champion holds too much power.

While I grant you that as champion he should have the right to pick and choose opponents, there should be some authority which makes Graham wrestle men who deserve the title. It's only right.

In other words, Ivan Putski deserves another chance.

JEFF HEALEY
Rome, N.Y. □

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VERY RARE BACK ISSUES TO COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTIONS-\$5 per copy

We receive many requests from collectors all over the world for back issues which were sold out long ago. Some collectors offered as much as \$25 for a single rare back issue. Unfortunately, we could not comply because not even one copy remained.

But here is some good news. We recently consolidated our warehouses and uncovered a small number of copies of some issues which had been sold out for years. Now we are offering these extremely rare issues, on a FIRST COME FIRST SERVE BASIS, for \$5 per copy. These copies will not last long, so we caution you to order immediately to avoid being disappointed. Not all these copies are in perfect condition. Some have soiled backs or marred covers and frayed edges. But they are still very rare collectors' items, well worth \$5 a copy.

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- March 1970
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- November 1970
- January 1971
- March 1971
- April 1971
- May 1971
- June 1971
- August 1971
- December 1971
- January 1972
- March 1972

(THE WRESTLER con't.)

- May 1972
- June 1972
- July 1972
- November 1972
- May 1973

INSIDE WRESTLING

- November 1968
- May 1969
- December 1969
- April 1970
- June 1970
- December 1970
- March 1971
- May 1971
- April 1972
- September 1972
- October 1972
- December 1972
- February 1973

(INSIDE WRESTLING con't.)

- March 1973
- June 1973
- August 1973
- January 1975

WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED

- May 1965

SPECIAL ISSUES

- Annual 1969
- Annual 1972 #2
- Winter 1970
- Big Book 1968
- Big Book 1969
- Wres. Greatest Bouts Sum 1975
- Wrestling Superstars Sum 1975
- Best of the Wrestler Spring 1976

SPORTS REVIEW

- July 1974
- January 1975

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INSIDE WRESTLING'S \$100,000 GAMBLE

(Continued from Page 33)

when countries have banned professional wrestling. Sooner or later, the sport is revived, but who wants to wait 87 years between matches?

We don't want wrestling historians to talk about the waning years of the 20th century as the time when wrestling was banned.

It is our considered opinion that Bob Backlund can reverse the current course of wrestling.

It is imperative wrestling be saved from the rulebreaking plague. Backlund can be the first step. Others will follow. If this works, we'll continue to add to purses, enabling scientific wrestlers to get shots at the NWA and AWA titles. Backlund's match against Graham may be the most important battle in our lifetime. The fate of wrestling depends on it.



Above: Backlund proves his scientific skills against Billy Robinson. Below: Harley Race climbs the ropes to avoid Bobby's attack.



**Red Cross.
The Good
Neighbor.**

How are Graham and Backlund reacting to this offer? Just as one might expect.

"Thanks for the dough," Graham declares with a sneer. "There's all sorts of things I can do with it. I



Graham wins a test of strength against Ivan Putski. Billy may be the most powerful man in wrestling.

might buy any number of things, like Bob Backlund. Yeah, I think I'll do that. I'll pay Backlund the \$100,000 to become the worst rulebreaker in history. Won't that stick in your craws? Or maybe I'll just make him my servant. Won't he look good carrying Grand Wizard into the ring? I'll even have Backlund break your photographer's camera. Money makes the world go round, and you're going to make it spin much faster."

As for Backlund, he promises, "I'll give the money to charity. There are millions of starving people all over the world. One hundred thousand dollars can buy them food and shelter. I don't want the money. All that matters is the honor of being champion."

Two men; and their only common denominator is athletic greatness. Graham has accepted our offer of wrestling Backlund for the \$100,000. He has yet to set a date. All we can do now is hope. And pray. □

WE ARE GIVING AWAY OVER

\$20,000.00

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Can you identify this American landmark? If you can you are on your way to winning your share of \$21,125 Dollars!!

Using the clue words (we've done the first letter as an example), fill in the blank squares to spell out the landmark, which is the Statue of _____. □

After you have finished your puzzle, fill in your name and address and send it to us. Include .25¢ for postage & handling and be on the way to winning BIG MONEY\$\$\$\$.

LET US PUT YOUR NAME ON OUR WINNERS LIST - CUT OUT & MAIL TODAY!

Puzzle Association of America
Dept. 3131
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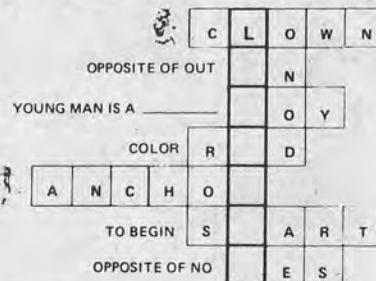
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Pic. Bk/Spr 76



Pic. Bk/Sum 76



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Pic. Bk/Win 76



Pic. Bk/Mar 77



MARCH/75



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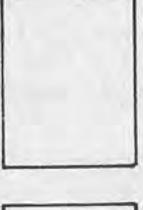
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Pic. Bk/May 77



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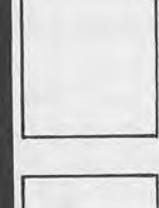
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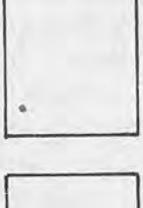
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NOV/76



Pic. Bk/Jun 77



Pic. Bk/Aug 77



Pic. Bk/Oct 77



JAN/77



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Pic. Bk/Sep 77



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"NOW I'M THE AMERICAN DREAM!"

(Continued from Page 36)



Flair is bent over double by Rhodes' armlock. Dusty is appealing to the fans to see whether or not he should finish Ric off. While the crowd screamed its wishes, Flair escaped the hold.

exclaimed in welcome, "you're here to honor the new American Dream. The old Dream was really dumb. Long live the new Dream!"

Reporters just stood there in amazement. Not 30 minutes ago, Flair had turned tail and run out of the ring. Dusty Rhodes had battered the younger man seemingly at will. Yet, here stood Flair, not only proclaiming himself victor, but conqueror.

"Excuse me," one reporter interjected, "but didn't I just see you running scared from Dusty Rhodes?"

Flair looked at the man in innocent startlement. "Now I understand why wrestling fans are so ignorant. Reporters keep giving them the wrong interpretations of events. Perhaps I should apologize to the fans. They're not stupid, just mislead."

"Now let me tell you what really happened. I walked out of that ring because I was insulted. Dusty Rhodes is beneath my contempt. He's less than nothing. To think he's a worthy opponent for me is an insult. I left because the match wasn't good enough. Rhodes is a clumsy old fool. There was nothing going on in that match which interested me. I got disgusted and bored, so I left."

Try arguing with that. Flair isn't making excuses. He really believes this nonsense. The man can turn any defeat into victory. Since there's no sense trying to make him admit he's lying, it's best just to sit and listen to him ramble on.

"I'd been told," Flair declared, "that Rhodes was some special kind of wrestler. He could do this, do that, walk on water, you know . . . the whole routine. I don't mind telling you I was

nervous about this match. Butterflies in my stomach and all. Then I get in the ring with this loser. I couldn't believe it! Was this clumsy butterball really supposed to be so great? Is this what I trained so hard for? I felt betrayed. Dusty Rhodes couldn't hurt a crippled fly with a suicide complex.

"I did my best to make it a match. But within two minutes, I was bored out of my skull! I'm an athlete. This wasn't sport. I don't know what it was, but you can be damn sure it won't happen to me again."



Rhodes is down and Flair savagely lashes kicks to his victim's face and chest. This is typical of Ric's animalistic assaults.

"After a while, I felt guilty. Here the fans had to sit and watch this oaf flop around instead of seeing real wrestling. Well, never let it be said Ric Flair insulted the fans while he was wrestling. To put an end to this mockery, I left the ring in disgust.

"Everyone there could see Rhodes wasn't in my class. He's a pathetic slob. Therefore, because of my intense patriotism, I'll allow myself to be called the American Dream

(Continued on page 64)

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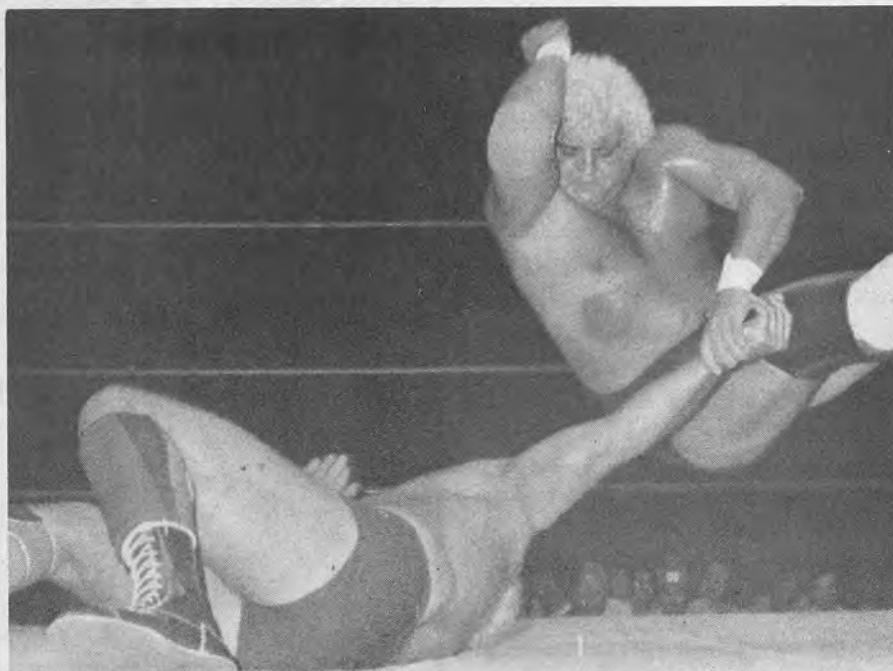
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"NOW I'M THE AMERICAN DREAM!"

(Continued from Page 63)



Above: Rhodes has Flair sprawled on the canvas, a perfect position for Dusty to deliver a devastating elbowsmash. Flair had a sore shoulder for three weeks. Below: Rhodes is all professional as he hurls Flair into the ropes late in their match. By this time, Dusty dominated the action.



me."

"If Rhodes is so bad," one reporter queried, "why didn't you just defeat him and have an

from now on. At least our nation won't have to bear the insult of Dusty Rhodes coupled with its name. God bless America. And

end to it? There were many people—not blessed with your unique insights—who thought Rhodes kicked the living daylights out of you."

"A mean person would have done it," Flair declared, "but kindness is one of my many virtues. Why embarrass this pathetic excuse for a wrestler by easily beating him. Everyone knows I can do it. Only a small person would actually take advantage of someone so bad as Rhodes. There's no sense proving what everyone takes for granted. I'm too big a man to beat Rhodes. I don't expect reporters to understand that."

This kind of verbal fencing went on for a few more minutes. Flair repeated his claims of superiority and no one believed him. As reporters prepared to leave, Flair reminded them, "Remember to tell your readers I'm the new American Dream!"

The readers can be told, but there's no way they can be made to believe it.

It didn't bother Dusty to hear about Flair's insults and proclamations. "Flair lost," Rhodes remarked, "and that's that. The fans saw what happened. There are films and photographs. Flair's claims won't hold water. Let him say what he wants. Until he can back it up in the ring, it means nothing.

"I'm the American Dream! Everyone knows it, daddy. No one dares say differently. Except Flair. Now everyone knows Flair is a fool.

"There'll be a next time. Our paths will cross again. Then, Flair won't run away. He won't be able to. The next time, the kid'll be carried out of the ring. You can bet the mortgage on it."

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"Look who's smiling now!"

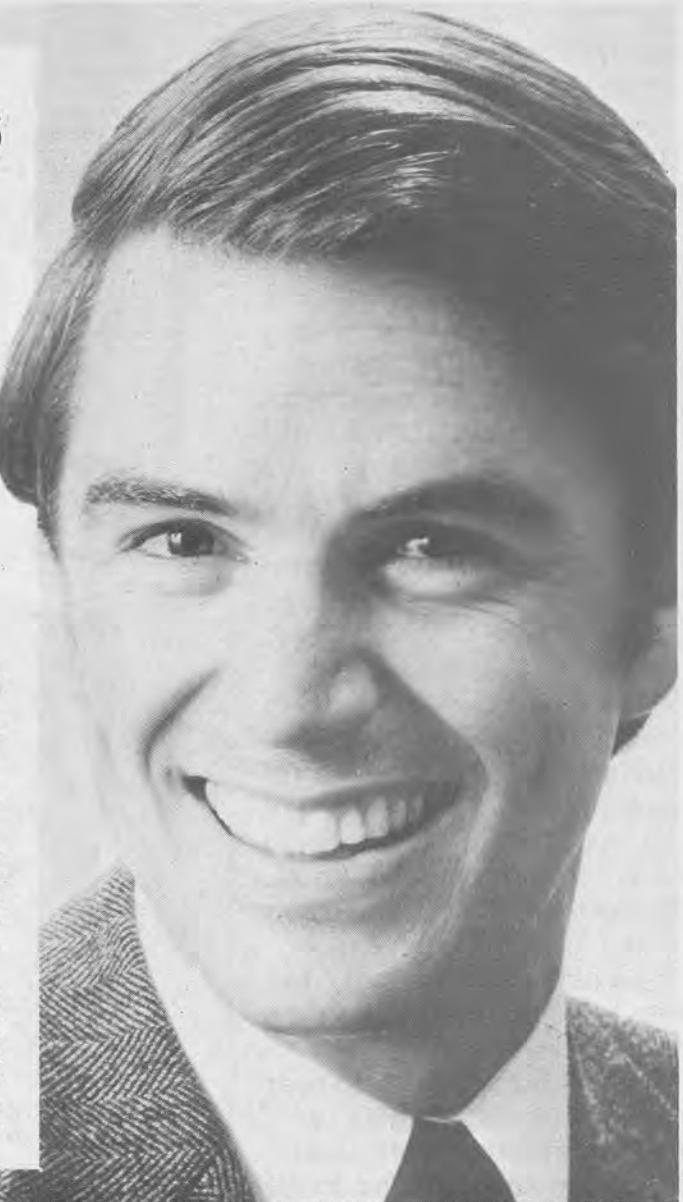
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